THE COMMONWEAL

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MEXICO ONCE MORE

THE publication, by the American Committee on the Rights of Religious Minorities, of information gathered by five competent investigators who went to Roumania in order to study the relationship existing there between the government and "unofficial" religious groups, is in every way a remarkable document. It proves that facts are obtainable even when feeling runs very high. It shows also that American public opinion is not indifferent toward acts of injustice, however remote from its immediate domestic sphere they may be. There is, however, a still better reason why Americans—and Catholics in particular—should read this book, which is published by the Beacon Press of Boston under the title, Roumania Ten Years After. This reason may be stated best, perhaps, in the form of a question. Why is it that, after months of terrible suffering and sacrifice in Mexico, no attempt has been made by any American group to investigate, in some manner impartially, the situation there? We may add that the formation of commissions or other groups of inquiry has been suggested time after time. The most important, from the point of view of the attention it received, is probably that outlined some weeks ago by The Commonweal itself.

One may profitably begin to review the question by observing that three indubitable facts regarding the Mexican situation exist. First, the country is on the brink of social and economic chaos, for reasons of one kind or another. Secondly, there is in progress (and has been during a considerable period of time) a conflict between the Calles government and the Catholic Church, responsibility for which has not yet been determined to the general satisfaction. Thirdly, an almost complete silence in regard to the situation has been maintained by the press and all non-Catholic agencies interested in the formation of public opinion. This "mum's the word" attitude is certainly not inspired by the belief that the Mexican problem is of no great importance to the United States. Anyone who does not consider it one of the biggest items in contemporary news must be termed, if he be sincere, astonishingly misinformed.

What, then, does it mean to us that Mexico has disintegrated socially, economically and financially? One may best undertake to answer this query by pointing to the vast new human problem that extends from St. Louis westward through half a dozen states to the Pacific Ocean. Here millions of immigrants from south of the Rio Grande have recently appeared in a raw mass that is being absorbed as quickly as possible by agricultural and other "developments" in need of rough, cheap labor. The educational, civic, moral

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and religious needs of this population are tremendous. Primitive poverty is its most immediate characteristic. Obviously this, independently of all else, is of the very greatest importance to the United States. And when one remembers that the reason why such a tide of immigration has set in is simply that millions—literally millions—of Mexicans found it impossible to exist at home, the sum total of catastrophe grows staggering.

The balance-sheet of a nation that lives on one of the richest soils in the western world shows only a rapidly mounting debt. Heap upon heap of pesos has been added steadily to the indebtedness bequeathed by older decades of revolution, so that the only hope remaining at present is for another heavy loan from the United States. This will be forthcoming, however, only upon definite conditions—the organization of Mexican industry and national resources in such a way that an amount of revenue sufficient to meet interest and amortization payments will be guaranteed. Here the coöperation of our government, through the State Department, is indispensable. That government, moreover, is vitally concerned with Mexico for still another reason. The spirit of the Monroe Doctrine and the clear import of various treaties and precedents morally and even juridically obligates us to do whatever we can for the tranquillity and prosperity of Mexico. Washington has created and guaranteed the existence of the present Mexican régime. Washington has underwritten the existing Mexican constitution. Neither of these would be what it is if the endorsement of the United States had been withheld. The duty implied in these facts is evident. As a nation we possess varied responsibilities throughout the world, but none is nearly so important and none is so binding upon the moral conscience as are our obligations to this nearest of our neighbors.

Yet who does not see that under the prevailing reign of silence just this one major problem escapes all surveillance by public opinion? We are unable even to discuss Mexican immigration. Not one jot or tittle of the terms under which Mexico is to be granted its next loan is expounded to the citizens of this country. Nobody is able to discover whether the existing legal relationships can or will be modified in some manner, or whether our government is upholding its clear right of moral judgment. Through Mr. Morrow we have dispatched our "friendship" to the city which Cortez once beheld in awe. Apparently, however, we sent our eyesight and our common sense in the same shipment. Mexico is a problem about which we, as a nation, know nothing, to information concerning which we close our eyes and ears—and for which we are responsible in conscience and in law. Mexico is the only affair of our government from which participation by public opinion is barred, and it is also the one in which such opinion ought to be most deeply interested.

How shall we explain this anomaly? By simply stating the second of our facts—a war against the Catholic Church exists in Mexico. No other explanation is possible, for the reason that none exists. A large body of United States citizens have made up their minds, for one cause or another, that the Mexican Catholics are to blame for the prevailing persecution. We shall address no argument to them here. What we might say either would never reach them, or would be met with a stare ranging all the way from bitter to incredulous. But we do say to them—and more particularly to our non-Catholic friends of goodwill—that one fact is firm. Indifference to Mexico beause an attack upon the Church is in progress there, is indifference to an American duty. As a citizen interested in the integrity of your country, you cannot wash your hands of this thing that cries to heaven—this, the greatest political and social débâcle ever staged on the soil of the twin Americas, and in a great measure presided over by your government! And as one whose creed is the toleration of religious beliefs, you cannot be loyal until you have seen whether that creed can be established in Mexico.

This, therefore, is genuinely an American problem. It cannot be settled by Catholics alone, because Catholics are only a weak minority of American citizens. Some kinds of people, we know very well, rejoice in the situation, hoping that the "downfall of Rome" will blaze the way for their own crusades. But there are others—Protestants, Jews and men who have severed allegiance to any definite creed—who live by American rules of duty, honor and respect for justice. Many of these are powerful men, who can sway the public mind. To them we say, with all the earnestness at our command, that the time has come not to accept the Catholic view of the Mexican situation, or to denounce the stupid greed of the spiritual pirate, but to break this ring of silence. It will not do to neglect finding out what this thing really is. It will not do because—apart from all that is implied in the beautiful name of Christian—we all are Americans, because we must not neglect a solemn obligation, and because we cannot afford to let a people die.

We here are not the ones to declare that such and such a body ought to set up such and such a commission. It is not our business to outline the code of conduct which the kind of man to whom we appeal must follow. The more spontaneously he acts, the more notable will be his every word. We are ready to place before him the evidence we ourselves possess—if he asks for it—with no other request than that he weigh it fairly. But there is no reason why we should not admit that Catholics cannot any longer be expected to shoulder the whole burden alone. They have sorrowed with the martyrs of their faith. They have pitied priests in bondage, they have found shelter for children driven into exile. The impact of this constant spectacle of suffering has been theirs to meet and bear, day after day. But of themselves they cannot rescue American self-respect, or perform the nation's meed of Christian charity. Upon their heads you shall not place this guilt of blood.

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WEEK BY WEEK

TEAPOT DOME is about to stop being an object of scrutiny and revert to its time-honored status as property of the Navy. During its stay in the limelight, juries exculpated from guilt virtually all those arraigned as major offenders. The reason for this leniency was probably something like psychological inability on the part of citizens in the box to believe that successful business men would really conspire to defraud the government. They appear to have felt—and much can be said for their point of view—that the government was genuinely anxious to lease the oil reserves, and that the magnates in question merely "beat others to it" in the scramble to make a profit. The key to the entire situation is undoubtedly the conduct of ex-Secretary Fall. His behavior throughout is patently worthy of severe censure. Even the hypothesis that he acted with no intent of doing wrong would not excuse the secrecy, eccentricity and stupidity with which he consummated the deal. What interests the public most, however, is not his individual person but the fact that he appears as the representative of a governing clique who either did not know how to administer the country's affairs, or were alarmingly willing to gild their own palms. Fall abides as the symbol of the low degree to which the nation's moral thermometer descended. His name has, therefore, a definite appositeness. It will be difficult, as a result, to overestimate the importance of integrity as a qualification for high office in the immediate future. For the moment, the focus is upon every prospective candidate's virtue—or lack of it.

STRICTLY speaking, the California primaries are not a test of Governor Smith's popularity as a presidential candidate. The question they decide is whether rigorous addiction to prohibition is a favorite virtue with western Democrats. Upon that point Mr. McAdoo stood like a doughty warrior for a considerable time, and from it he has fallen into powerlessness in so far as party destinies are concerned. Altogether evident is the fact that dryness is no longer considered indispensable for political success. Governor Smith, it is true, mumbled a few overtures to Volsteadism some months back, but the disfavor and scepticism with which they were received served only to augment his reputation as a convinced wet. If, therefore, he can nevertheless win an overwhelming victory in California and meanwhile convince the South that all the chances for Democratic fortune are in his hands, it means that the spell of prohibition is broken. Indeed the drift may now be headed the other way. One does not suppose that Republicanism will be governed for the present by the advice of Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler, and make a clear pronouncement on the subject. But conceivably enough the time may come when both major parties will frankly shout their antipathy to the Eighteenth Amendment, for the sake of getting over a barrier to public good-will. The first step—always the hardest—has now been taken.

SOME weeks ago we expressed the hope that Mr. Claude Bowers, whose masterly discussion of political history had just attracted a great deal of attention, would be chosen to deliver the key-note address at the coming Democratic convention. It is a pleasure to realize that this desire, unlike so many others entertained during recent months, has been fulfilled by the official appointment of Mr. Bowers to the job. There never was a more dyed-in-the-wool Democrat—one whose mental meat and drink are the illustrious moments in party tradition. One may regret a little certain evidences of partisanship in his books, but they are, after all, only manifestos of an intellect which believes in the cause of popular government too deeply to be able to view it coolly and impartially, in the abstract. Even so, they are all searching, exhaustive studies, which throw indispensable light upon the origins of our government and our social ideals. To think of such a man doing the honors at Houston is to be reminded of great old days, when thinkers as genuine as Jefferson discussed the major business of the nation, and to be inspired with the hope that we may some day get out of the slough of unadulterated rant.

THAT international trade per se fosters good-will between buyer and seller is almost axiomatic. Only when conditions of sale acquire unnecessary complexities is this effect weakened or lost. Here is a fruitful distinction, emphasized anew by G. R. Parker, president of the American Exporters' and Importers' Association, New York, in addressing the National Foreign

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Trade Conference in Houston, which drew more than a thousand delegates from thirty-two states and fourteen foreign countries. Carefully avoiding a pro or con discussion of existing tariff schedules, he declared that those desirous of providing a market for the great surplus production of industries in this country should place no unnecessary obstacle in the way of free movement of goods to the United States. Primarily this is a good business maxim. More important, however, is the corollary that a bigger world outlook will induce a respect for the rights and welfare of competitor and customer, often one and the same. Mr. Parker may be right when he concedes that a tariff is essential to the protection of American industry, but many will feel that he grants too much when he includes the present rates in his acceptance. These must be fixed less haphazardly and inexpertly. Other means whereby legitimate and non-competitive trade may be facilitated and encouraged exist, but a sane revision of import duties will have a much greater effect.

THE London Daily Express has published several very important statements bearing upon the situation in Mexico. We have found it impossible as yet to obtain the entire series, but we know that a declaration of policy by President Calles was followed by a presentation of the Catholic case and editorial comment decidedly favorable to the second. Taken by itself this journalistic fact may seem relatively inconsequential. It must be associated, however, with the growing mass of discussion, opinion and protest in all parts of Europe—a volume of material so large that even an attempt to catalogue it would require several columns. By comparison, the continued silence of the American press is strange, to say the least. In so far as the Daily Express articles are concerned, it was inevitable both that Mr. Chesterton should have something to say regarding them, and that his remarks should make good reading. In G. K.'s Weekly he observes that President Calles is quite frank in stating that he is fighting the Catholic Church, and adds: "If this is the best that Calles can say for himself, he is not likely to come off very well when his victims are free to say anything against him." For the Calles defense can be summed up in his own phrase about wishing "to catch up with the progress of Europe."

"NOBODY," Mr. Chesterton continues, "can deny that President Calles has begun at the right end. He has begun with suppressing monasteries and slaying priests, just as we did; and in time he also may enjoy complete liberty and equality as we do; and no newspapers may be allowed unless they belong to about two millionaires; and men of the old Spanish blood may be stopped from drinking wine whenever an official chooses to forbid it; and all the lands of the Latin peasants may pass into the control of syndicates and money-lenders, and in Catholic countries also the poor shall be forbidden to have families and imprisoned as mentally deficient when they want to have them. . . . Let there be no impatience with the progress of Mexico. It has begun at the right end; and it is only 400 years behind the times." Thus there is made a point which ought not to be lost sight of in our talk about Mexico. Not only the methods of attaining progress may be reprehensible, but verily also the goal toward which one sets out to progress may be nothing more than a huge and grim mistake.

THAT the big wind which blew Mr. Mencken down the sawdust trail backward was not concocted by poor "dead Nietzsche" but by Dr. Howard Kelly and his associates in the business of a better Baltimore, is a fact brought to light by a passage at arms between the eminent Babe Ruth of literature and Mr. Nolan Rice Best, who contributes Christian copy to the Baltimore Coöperator. Averring that "the sneering insinuation that everybody who adheres to the evangelical view of life and its obligations is a moron and hypocrite effectually shuts up many a young mind against the Gospel and even prejudices many against the magnetic simplicity of Jesus," Mr. Nolan declares that the only effective antidote is "a more faithful present-day embodiment of the purity, the spiritual reality, the simple seriousness and especially the all-consuming eagerness to help others, which were the marks of Christ." Appreciating this opportunity to write a rejoinder and at the same time delve a little into autobiography, Mr. Mencken rushed to his place in the Evening Sun. He commended Mr. Nolan's politeness. He paused to flay Y. M. C. A. science. He revealed what heavy dividends are passed by corporations of "executive secretaries." Then he disclosed how it all started—back in 1910. The Evening Sun had just employed him to write a column. Suddenly "Dr. Howard A. Kelly, the late Dr. Kenneth G. Murray and various other wowsers set up a vice crusade, and presently it was in full blast, with prostitution fleeing from its old quarters to all parts of town." Mr. Mencken, in company (this time) with the police and the judges of the Supreme Bench, believed that "vice crusading was even more evil than vice." He said so, mentioning incidentally—with a resounding verbal smack each time—the names of the "sponsors and backers." What followed has been a long story. To make it short, Mr. Mencken and the "wowsers" have been throwing things at each other ever since. And Nietzsche is absolved.

WE CAN'T help wishing there had been a little more of Nietzsche in the whole show. To this Teutonic heretic life was, after all, more than a sequence of surface phenomena. Many who followed his relentless practice of unwrapping the essential process from heaps of tissue paper came, ultimately, to see the things that matter in a clear light, so that not a few Christian —even Catholic—religious teachers have spoken of his teaching as the "providential heresy" of the modern age. How many among the best has he not led by

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a circuitous path back to the feet of Christ! But Mr. Mencken, who started life with Nietzsche and followed him as far as the going was good, seems to be entangled for keeps in the underbrush. The chief scenery on his mental horizon is the "evangelical program"—a moral crusade which is not wrong in so far as it is ascetic, but only in so far as it is mistaken in thinking that free will is not the abiding fundamental fact in religious and moral life. The error is dangerous and we all appreciate the energy which the one-time employee of Charles H. Grasty has directed toward it. But even a bad boy cannot play the same piece all the time without running the risk of getting no farther with his music lesson.

THERE can be no discerning talk about books without some consideration of literary markets. The individuality of American writing, generation after generation, might be accounted for to a large extent by looking up the names and addresses of important publishers. One thinks also that much information regarding Catholic letters in the United States lies in such facts as these: the "Boston Irish" once had devoted and competent bookmen of their own, Thomas D'Arcy McGee among them; the Ave Maria Press was host to many authors; and the sign of Barclay Street gradually became the standard imprint upon Catholic books. In all such older enterprises, a definite though possibly a relatively feeble rhythm was evident. Life and growth existed. For some reason the more contemporary world witnesses an ebb of the distinctively Catholic tide in publishing, so far as non-devotional writing is concerned. It is true that one secular publisher after another adds Catholic books to his list, but this appears merely to emphasize more strongly the seeming failure of these volumes to interest a large audience or to influence the cultural trend. Indeed the publishers themselves are conscious, more than ever before, of the difficulties involved in book making and selling. They see that methods of distribution are changing, and that the mere spectacle of a dust-cover and a title no longer stirs anybody. New devices—the formation, for the advancement of sophisticated tastes, of mythical "clubs" presided over by popular literary "experts," for instance—are regulating, to a large extent, the volume of applause for authors.

ALL this is preliminary to the news that "The Catholic Book Club" has been organized under the tutelage of several prominent ecclesiastical and literary leaders. Similar in this respect to the secular organizations which have paved the way for it, the Club hopes to build up a corps of subscribers to whom appropriate books can be sent, at a price well under the retail figure, at monthly intervals. The standards of selection are to be, however, markedly individual. Though "only those books will be considered which are Catholic in the true sense," there will be no devotional treatises and no writing which falls below a mark indicative of quality. Nobody connected with the proposal has the idea that he can "control" the reading done by Catholics. It is hoped that criticism by subscribers will help to render the Club more effective, and to urge writers toward higher achievement. All such matters are, however, contingent upon the actual coming into being of the organization. Twenty million Catholics in the United States ought to produce 2,000 readers who would profit by the guidance offered. But circumstances are such that the difference between "ought" and "will" is frighteningly large. We trust that the endeavor, out of which nobody will make money and into which editors and executives must pour a great deal of their time, will prove successful far beyond present expectations. There are precedents for it not only in current "Book of the Month" and similar clubs, but in long-established, successful European organizations such as, for example, the Bonafatius-Verein and the Bonner Büchergemeinde.

THE recently agitated idea that universities should admit no student who has not determined what work he wishes to do in the world is certainly much too autocratic. Though there unquestionably exists a much greater demand today for utilitarian and special training than for liberal education and the cultivation of character, the American college should not be primarily a vocational school. This point was vigorously made by Kenneth C. M. Sills, president of Bowdoin College. Addressing the Boston Chamber of Commerce recently, he scoffed at the idea that any large number of high school graduates have decided on future careers and no longer look collegeward for assistance in their choice. It is unfortunately true that this hopeful glance is oftentimes in vain. As yet no satisfactory method of individual guidance has been developed. Equipped with most of the factors necessary for the work, colleges miss an opportunity of which educators are more and more conscious. President Sills, frankly confessing the fault, which he regarded as admitted in part by most professors, rightly concluded that if individual students were instilled with the necessity of thinking early and often about their future careers, the aimlessness of much university training would be ended.

EARNEST efforts to introduce Beuron art to Americans have been made during the last few years, but it is doubtful if the name Desiderius Lenz means a great deal here. Yet this Benedictine master, who died recently at the advanced age of ninety-six, was certainly one of the great innovators of his time. The secret of his art, which may be studied to best advantage, no doubt, in the Saint Maurus chapel at the Abbey of Beuron, Germany, appears to have been an intuition of the fundamental law of beauty. To this he gave the name of "canon" and a formalistic expression which somehow never conveyed his meaning clearly to others. Essentially, perhaps, it meant that if the artist "reconstructed reality" in a certain way, it would become what

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it really is, rather than what it seems to be. In other words, the primal form ordained by the Creator—this form is conceived of not in a Platonic but in a primary religious sense—would appear, cleansed of the shadows that take their rise from merely material nature. Father Desiderius (for thus he was lovingly entitled, although he had never been ordained a priest) believed that knowledge of this artistic purpose had been given to man in paradise, and conserved beyond that through Egyptian and partly through Greek art. It was a pure and lofty vision, which may best be contemplated in the presence of his handiwork. Abstract discussion of the matter has never convinced anyone, but the serene work of Beuron at the apogee of its creative skill is an incontrovertible argument. The Saint Maurus chapel has been termed by competent art critics "one of the greatest achievements of the nineteenth century." A modern lover of religious art is likely to be still more enthusiastic, if he stops to consider how marvelously well the achievement of Desiderius Lenz prepared the way for building and decoration in a spirit of deep liturgical significance.

A REPORT from the South has it that the jail at Austin, Texas, wherein O. Henry once spent some time in custody, is to be transformed into a memorial library. About this season of the year, all libraries seem pretty much jails to the youth of the land, bent upon obtaining fuel for some term paper or upon making ready for severe professorial scrutiny. Who knows, then, but what the citizens of Austin—at least those under thirty—may find the change eminently fitting and proper? Even the rest of us may profitably wonder whether jails or libraries render the nation most service. After all, the case of O. Henry itself leaves the matter open to doubt. He was released from jail by no less a person than the President of the United States; and who was ever let out of a library by the chief executive? He learned much from four bare walls—for instance the habit of meditation—whereas impartial scrutiny of folk who spend a great deal of time in reading rooms makes one marvel at the ability of human nature to remain ignorant in spite of everything. Finally he was served meals rather than books in jail—a distinction which leads one to observe that, while the meals stimulated (to a degree which one hesitates to estimate) the grocery trade, library catering interferes mightily with book selling. One portion goes so far, as the German savant remarked when he learned that, although he had heard from seventeen American students regarding his "epoch-making work," only one copy had been dispatched across the seas. But it must be added that to all who, after the fashion of O. Henry, are authors, the library has one outstanding virtue: one can always look oneself up in the card indexes. Similar research in jail records might prove a little embarrassing. Yes, on the whole we are happy to follow, to its present fortunate conclusion, the evolution of Travis jail.

GERMANY ADVANCES

GERMANY has endorsed the Kellogg suggestions for a treaty to outlaw war. This favorable reply might have been predicted, so consistently has it been the policy of the Reich to promote the disappearance of war as an aid to diplomatic action. Such a course has been the result not so much of the 1918 revolution as of the Versailles treaty. Germany was disarmed, and so compelled to seek its political fortunes elsewhere than on the battlefield. One effect of this fact was to develop its diplomatic consciousness to a point far above what had been attained under the old system. The imperial Reich had placed so much faith in its armies that all other media of action were considered secondary. This became so evident during the war that enemy countries could reckon with it as an unchanging phenomenon, and derive heavy profit from the circumstance that one chancellor after another was unable to do anything without the field marshal's consent. During ten years of peace, however, German diplomacy has been both brilliant and remarkably successful. Little by little the economic and political status of the country has been improved until no machinery existing to promote coöperative activity in Europe is without a German hand somewhere near the controlling lever.

The immediate concern of the new Reich is, of course, international justice. Realizing that the effect of post-war treaties is to make it a "conquered nation" as compared with various "victorious peoples," it is resolved to demand to the full extent of its ability the enforcement of such clauses as are designed to modify the contrast. One of these is the Versailles stipulation that all European peoples are to disarm as soon as Germany has completely dismantled its martial system. But owing to a variety of circumstances, this letter of the law is pretty much dead so far as various of the former allied powers are concerned. Military strength is used by both France and Italy in promoting "alliances" which might otherwise lose their reason for existing. Incidentally, it makes possible recourse to armed force every time there is a disagreement with Germany. Thus the status of European armaments has become the most vital and the most hotly discussed of continental problems.

It is obvious, however, that German approval of Secretary Kellogg's plan means very little in so far as the concrete realization of that plan is concerned. The Reich is in no position to declare war upon anybody. Even its obligations to the League are subject to treaty stipulations. Nevertheless this new action is of importance because it calls attention to the growing interdependence between Germany and the United States. Financial coöperation and obligation constitute one side of the relationship. A community of feeling regarding world problems, the outgrowth of historical conditions, is another. And one may be sure that so astute a statesman as M. Briand is fully aware of this rap-

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prochement and unwilling to sacrifice any opportunity to render still more cordial the attitude of the United States toward his country. Secretary Kellogg has not presented the French minister with what can, with any degree of precision, be termed a basket of roses. How to adjust the "necessities" of the present situation with the idealistic proposals which have emanated from Washington is a puzzle which the sages who dwell on the banks of the Seine may not succeed in solving at a stroke.

Meanwhile it is worthy of note that, as a result of political and social circumstances, nations now exist which actually find that "outlawry of war" is to their advantage. Though there is still a "balance of power" in favor of war as an instrument for the preservation of national advantages, it is now correct to say that a "bloc" is forming on the other side. This fact may be greeted with satisfaction, even though it tends to throw light upon the obstacles that remain in the way, and to make them look more formidable than they did before. Somebody—of a time remote, perhaps, from our own—will find it exceedingly interesting to trace the genesis of the idea with which Mr. Kellogg has startled and perplexed the world. But he would discover, we believe, nothing more remarkable than the plain fact that the Secretary of State has simply acted to the nation's advantage. Aloof though we are from the specific configurations of world politics, we have our place, of necessity, in the world's life and must labor to render it more stable.

THE MONKS OF THE WEST

IT IS an observation none the less true because it wears the livery of paradox, that we judge ourselves when we judge history. Much of our dissatisfaction with things as they are finds expression in a wistful return to other ages and a reëxamination of the roots from which sprang the happiness and well-being which we are readier to admit today when the dream of a continuous graph of progress in the human story has suffered some hard knocks. Mr. Finley Peter Dunne's immortal bartender once told his friend Hennessy that he was tired of hearing what nations died of and would like to be told something about what they "lived of." Historians, whose conclusions are more influenced by the thought of their own time than they would be prepared to admit, are found ready to supply the missing information. As a consequence a great many of our contemporary biographies and historical monographs lack that superior air which the perfectionists of the nineteenth century assumed.

One feature of the change is a revaluation of the conception of monasteries as abodes of idleness—or worse, as knots and clots in the circulation of human ideas, from whose abolition in Anglo-Saxon and Germanic countries progress is to be dated. Montalembert and Newman, were they alive and writing today, would not find themselves the isolated protesters against a misreading of the past that they once were. They would discover a host of thinkers outside the Church quite ready to agree with them that in the careless destruction of something very old and very precious, human thought, to say nothing of human charity, suffered an irreparable loss.

Among these unexpected allies would be Mr. Rollin Lynde Hartt, one of our most thoughtful writers, a graduate of Andover Theological Seminary, and the author of a reverent study of the Saviour of the world which shines by contrast with others that might be named. So far is Mr. Hartt from sharing the views of those who justify the first step toward religious disruption which the reformers of the sixteenth century took, that a recent article in the Forum finds him pleading for a return, not only in theory, but in actual practice, to the monastic system in his own Church. Mr. Hartt points out that to consider the ancient monastery as a centre of passive contemplation is an entire misunderstanding of history. For many of its members it was merely an occasional resting-place during long tours of itinerant evangelization. It was "a publishing house where books were patiently copied by hand and, in a way, a journalistic establishment." It was "a hospital. . . and a medical school . . . an agricultural experiment station and a model farm. . . a Mills Hotel where wayfarers unable to afford lodging at an inn were sure of a meal and a bed."

These things, of course, are matters of common knowledge within the older Church. To find them shared by others should render the Catholic not alone thankful for the spread of enlightenment outside his communion, but doubly loyal to the monastic ideal as it exists and has always existed, through the darkest and most discouraging days, within it. The news that it is the intention of the Benedictine order to establish a monastery of this oldest of our orders at the national capital and within the precincts of Washington University, indeed, that a nucleus, "Saint Anselm's Priory" housed in a small frame cottage, already exists, should appeal to both his imagination and his desire to help forward so attractive and predestined a scheme. The order is no newcomer in America. Eighteen Benedictine monasteries already exist, spaced across the Middle-West and South. But in taking their place in what everyone perceives is to become one of the great centres of American intellectual life in the future, the Benedictines enter upon a very definitely new epoch in their secular history. What we are agreed to call civilization and the humanities rose (of this the world is pretty well conscious by now) in the Benedictine monasteries that looked out over swamp, fen and ruin. To see this ancient order reasserting its age-old heritage in a country whose destiny and possibilities no man dares to measure, should be a spur to the private and corporate generosity which we see building so splendidly because it is always conscious of building for posterity.

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POTENZIANI OF THE PILGRIM STAFF

By HARVEY WICKHAM

WHAT was privately said by Prince Spada-Potenziani, Governor of Rome, to Mayor Walker on the latter's recent visit to Italy is a secret, like the word which Odin whispered to Balder at sunset. And what the Mayor even more recently said to the Prince in New York is likely to be clothed in such mystery as hides the name which Ulysses bore among the women. Every traveler nowadays is a diplomat, and preserves a certain air of reserve. Nevertheless, I venture the surmise that, after Governatore and Mayor had finished with baseball, football (Rome is football mad just at present) and the Italian colony, their talk turned to streets.

This is not the obvious topic it may seem. Roman roads are famous. Roman streets are notorious. And everybody knows what New York can stage in the way of a jam. But as once all roads led to Rome, so now do many seek to escape from it. Potenziani himself has taken the pilgrim staff, looking for a way out of his material difficulties. There are other difficulties, however, of an immaterial sort. There is a philosophy of roads. Probably the Prince (his full name is Principe Lodovico Spada Veralli Potenziani) did not discuss these with his official New York host as he stood aghast in the subway—supposing for a moment that the visitor was admitted to that chamber of horrors. But as he has been an ardent Fascist ever since the marching days of July, 1921, it is inconceivable that he should not discuss them with somebody. Few can say with whom these famous international travelers really come to talk.

Potenziani was formerly provincial councilor for Rieti, then one of the districts of Umbria, and still owns a magnificent villa in that region. "Gentiluomo di razza," he is connected with the famous house of Spada, so familiar to readers of Marion Crawford—a house which has produced two cardinals and one historical painter, Leonello Spada, of Bologna. Indeed it is as Spada-Potenziani that the Prince is generally known. When, on December 3, 1926, he was appointed Governor of Rome, he was already famous for the influence which he wielded in his own district; for his studies of social and economic questions; and for the skill with which he had managed his patrimonial estates. But chiefly he was famous as a sportsman.

"Uno sportmann appassionato ed audace," his old neighbors describe him; "a man with solid information, and a firm character."

"A man of great initiative, of simple tastes and of a large, modern outlook," said his companions of the march.

But by "sportmann" we must not understand a shooter of song birds. Potenziani's passionate audacity concerned itself chiefly with the automobile, and the contest for the Potenziani Cup is still one of the great annual events of Italy. He wanted to popularize the automobile because the automobile would popularize good roads and shut the mouths of French innkeepers on the border, whose favorite amusement was that of warning motorists that if they crossed into Italy they would surely ruin their machines. So, before attempting to point out some of the difficult spiritual and political highways at the beginning of which New Italy now finds herself, it may be well to consider this Questione Stradale in a few of its more literal aspects.

Until about four years ago, it was the custom in Rome to turn to the left, as in London. Then the rule was changed, so as to bring the capital in line with other Italian cities. If in Rome today you do as the Romans are supposed to do, you will turn to the right when in a vehicle, and to the left if you are on foot. But here the spirit of the materialistic secular government, born in 1870 and by no means yet done away with, begins to show itself. Being materialistic, it was necessarily impracticable—an evil spirit. Liberalism, in setting everybody "free," had relegated discipline to the waste heap. Romans, especially, had learned to disdain turning aside for others. They preferred to collide. Fillipo Cremonesi, Potenziani's predecessor in office, erected handsome signs, reading, "Pedoni a Sinistra." In vain. Keep to the left they would not—much less walk on the left side of the street. Mussolini himself was now telling them that they were the heritors of Caesar, which they interpreted as meaning that every man was named Julius.

Cremonesi concentrated his efforts on the Corso, and posted two policemen at every corner. To dodge traffic cops became at once the chief municipal pastime, and the moment the visible arm of the law was withdrawn (Italian policeman go to bed, or at least disappear, at sundown) the old blockade reëstablished itself. Cremonesi resigned. Potenziani, nothing daunted, put up more signs, appointed extra policemen, and today there is actually a tendency on the part of pedestrians to observe the rules of the road even when nobody is looking. Encouraged, the Prince set about taming the automobile—as a father will sometimes try to curb a family which threatens to bite the hand that feeds it.

In Rome the driver of a machine imagines himself a contestant in the Ben Hur chariot race. The word "pedone" comes from "pedestre," meaning not only "pedestrian" but "humble." A lot the lords of pagan times cared for the humble! Therefore why should not the gasoline chariot rush, scraping the buildings, through narrow alleys without sidewalks, amid cries of "Si salvi chi puo"?

The horn is an improvement which the ancient

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chariot did not possess, so the Italian motorist uses it to call his friends to the windows of palaces having no door-bells. He also uses it to express his taste for music. But above all he delights to sound the horn in protest when a man in uniform and brandishing a white stick bids him halt at a crossing. Potenziani's last act before leaving Rome on his pilgrimage was to announce that this sort of thing would no longer be tolerated. He suggested that horns having the voice of the bull of Bashan should be melted down.

Thus even the difficulties of a city's executive have their foundation in the minds of men—a truth which merely expands itself when we turn to the difficulties of the head of a nation. The Black Shirts in their march on Rome merely dashed across country. Their present situation finds them in the long uphill stretch of a highway which they have in great part to build as they go. To have reached the material city is nothing. They must climb, not only its seven hills—which, as a matter of fact, have been much lowered in the course of the ages—but its ancient spiritual heights. And they must carry the nation in their train. So they are not quite as dashing as at first. They are getting their second wind.

On March 24 and 25, when the ninth anniversary of the foundation of the Fasci de Combattimento was celebrated, a stranger in Rome might have thought that a new war had been declared. But it was only another move in this old war which calls itself the Fascist revolution. A new class had been called to the colors, or "sotto il segno del Littorio," as the Italians more accurately put it. The streets were filled with marchers, young but already accustomed to uniforms. They had passed through the Balilla, through the Avanguardisti, and were ready to be given rifles as adult followers of the duce. Eighty thousand in all. They will now do their military duty (strange to say, a man actually in the army is suspended from the Fascist order and owes allegiance only to the king) and then return to their real leader, either as plain Black Shirts or members of the milizia—a body resembling our state police except that it is nationally organized. The milizia guards the frontier (so that minor "incidents" may not involve the regular army) regulates between-city traffic, and protects the traveling public generally. Thus do all roads lead to roads.

Italy is learning that good pavements, whether in Potenziani's Rome or in the country, are made of gold, like the streets of heaven; that gold may be had on credit, but repayment distilled only from sweat. These are the days of dull economics. The Italians seek to enliven them by shouting, "Evviva!" whenever the lira is mentioned, and by much bringing down of right fists upon the palms of outstretched left hands. There is romance, too, in production, in farming, in manufacture, in engineering, even in self-denial, can one but see it. The absence of party politics gives a clarity to current economic discussion which renders it palatable—especially to foreigners who do not have to pay the taxes. It strikes the American visitor as a pleasant novelty, like making wine from grapes.

Nevertheless times are a little hard. The souls of merchants are being tried. Sound credit and a gold-based currency have their price. In spite of the feverish activity of the building trades, there would be considerable unemployment were it not for the vast program of public works being carried out by the government. In the fiscal year 1926-1927 more than two thousand millions of lire were expended in farm relief, hydro-electric enterprises, irrigation and drainage schemes, and in digging up old works of art. But road-making (rail and highway) is the standby.

"The means we have adopted to deal with unemployment," says Minister of Public Works Giurati, "are not a mere expedient, but a carefully thought out policy."

So the public payroll ever tends to increase, and promises to increase yet more in the future. The advantage of the system is that it distributes money among the poor, especially the sufferers from floods and earthquakes and those orphaned or mutilated by the war, and that—unlike the English dole—it avoids creating a pauper psychology and robs nobody of self-respect. Under present circumstances, it seems to be necessary for the government to supply that initiative and daring which the individual citizen, still half-blinded by past dreams of class dominance, appears to lack. I do not pretend to foresee the eventual result, or to say whether—after Mussolini—private enterprise will gradually reduce the sphere of government, or government gradually become the sole channel for individual expression. But it is reasonably safe to prophesy that Mussolini will succeed in what he himself has called his intention "to make the Italian people over again."

His is like a hard but kind-intentioned fist, in which the whole body politic lies as a not unplastic mass. Before the fist is opened, the mass will, in all likelihood, have attained not only the shape but the feeling of a nation. Nor is there any reason to fear that this nationalism will be either excessive or narrow in comparison with the nationalism of other countries. One must remember that Italy started cold. It will take years yet before a Roman, a Neapolitan, a Tuscan, a Venetian or a Lombard thinks of himself as an Italian in the way that a Londoner thinks of himself as an Englishman.

And until that day, Italy will seem to outsiders as under a certain restraint. There will be some suppressed squealing and gnashing of teeth. Mussolini had frankly acknowledged that his Fascisti stand separate from the mass of the people. As an officer in the Italian army said to me the other day: "It is not expected to make the average citizen of the present generation a real Fascist at heart. We are only holding the fort until a new generation grows up. They will have worn black shirts from infancy, and will have both the instinct and the philosophy of nationalism.

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We will then be an older nation—older than our years, because of the intensive culture of this sentiment and this thought."

New Italy has not as yet experienced any great religious awakening. A people that has been infected for more than half a century by a mixed philosophy emanating from the unholy trinity of Voltaire, Rousseau and Marx is not to be cured in the twinkling of an eye. Italy has turned its back upon materialism and sentimentality, but has not proceeded very far in its new direction. Daroski, a writer for La Stirpe, in the issue of February last, says this:

> The battle of 1914 [against foreign ideas] still continues. It has today an army and a leader. Italian thought strives to triumph, to return to its own originality, to its own history, summae and masters. Every one of our philosophers, speaking in the language of his time, affirms that the exterior truth which the material world imposes upon us does not exclude the existence of a spirit. And of this spirit our revolutionary Fascisti are the last inheritors.

But the spirit he refers to is largely national, and religious only in the sense that the monist, the humanist and the modernist is religious. The fallacies of materialism were easily laid bare; its failure to work in everyday life was palpable and grotesque. But in modernism it is easy to linger—as it is easy to linger in an oasis in a desert until its fitful spring runs dry. That Mussolini intends to press on to the journey's end there can be no doubt. But the present is an hour of laborious trudging rather than of startling arrivals. Meanwhile, he too is giving much attention to physical roads. He said the other day in the Chamber of Deputies:

> The work completed by Giurati appears especially noteworthy in connection with the growing systematization of the arduous problems involved in the maintenance of highways, a problem which has become pressing because of the deterioration brought about by the neglect of this essential resource of the nation in the recent past.

And Giurati, referring to the new law which creates a special highway commission, observed:

> First among the proposed thoroughfares stand those which follow the august system of the ancient empire—if not in their precise routes at least in their general direction as shown by manuscripts and monuments. This appeal to history is not without significance. It reveals clearly the determination of the duce to reconstitute the imperial traditions of Rome.

Talk about imperial Rome was popular—in Rome—even during the pre-Fascist epoch. But it then meant the liberty of nobles. It now means discipline imposed upon the plebs—that is, everybody. Quite another pair of tires, as Potenziani's reckless motorists are fast discovering.

But while the old Roman stone pavements are being superseded by smooth and peaceful asphalt, the political roads reaching out toward foreign countries are frequently torn up by scares having (in the newspapers) much the look of barricades. The army, however—if one may judge by the conversation of its officers—does not consider these incidents as alarming. They admit that Italy's need for expansion is a disturbing factor, but no more than a similar need in other growing countries. Questions like that of Southern Tyrol (Upper Trentina, they call it) will never provoke conflict, they say, until the great nations are ready for another war. Their theory is that the great nations merely use these matters as excuses, and that, when the psychological hour strikes, the lesser nations become pawns in the bigger game.

That Italy is regarded as a conservative country by the other powers is obvious to anyone who watches the fluctuations of international relationships. The present arrangement with England, whereby Assyria has been divided into two zones of influence, would have been unthinkable during the Macdonald primacy, or even in the days of Lloyd George.

Potenziani is happily free from worries of this sort. His roads have merely to be pushed every year a few blocks farther into the already Roman campagna. But doubtless he agrees with Mussolini's chief lieutenant, Signore Turati, who said lately in a speech at Florence:

> I do not know whether I love my Fascist comrades more for their virtues or for their defects. So many of their defects are characteristic and attractive, a part of the Italian temperament—especially that most dangerous defect of all, the tendency to exaggerate. We must not lose ourselves to such an extent in building aircastles that we have no time left to build real ones.

Exaggeration! A tendency not only of the rank and file but of Italy's political theorists, who try to reach the ultimate with every line of thought and would let one good custom corrupt the world. But the real leaders walk with their feet squarely upon the ground—in the middle of their roads.

The Lonely Plowman

Up and down the furrows
  A lonely man was I;
The mice were in their burrows,
  The birds were in the sky,
  The hares went scudding by.

Round and round the ridges
  The horses plodded on
Stung by the whining midges;
  Even my dog had gone,
  And I was left alone.

Oh but I was lonely
  From my head down to my feet!
A fat old gopher only
  Strolled through the stubble-wheat.
  —I killed him with a wrench I threw from
    my lister-seat.

KENNETH W. PORTER.

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HOW CATHOLICS SEE PROTESTANTS

I. THE CRUX OF COÖPERATION

By J. ELLIOT ROSS

(This paper and the one which is to follow it next week, taken together, constitute a companion-piece or sequel to Father Ross's analysis of the Fairfield Experiment, which appeared in The Commonweal on November 30 and December 7, 1927, under the title, How Protestants See Us.—The Editors.)

BACK before Christmas I described in The Commonweal the results of a group of Protestants meeting in Fairfield, Connecticut, to discuss their prejudices against Catholics. At that time I quoted the words of Pius XI (addressed in the first instance, it is true, to our relations with oriental Christians, but seemingly applicable also to Protestants) indicating that there were misunderstandings on both sides. And in view of what some Protestants had done at Fairfield, I hinted that it would only be sportsmanlike for a Catholic group to carry on a similar discussion of their prejudices against Protestants. In a letter to The Commonweal commenting on these articles, President W. H. P. Faunce, of Brown University, expressed a similar opinion. And the same idea was voiced in a letter to the Churchman, an Episcopalian paper published in New York.

There is some satisfaction, therefore, in being able to report the results of the meeting of such a Catholic group. The attempt was made to have it correspond as closely as possible, mutatis mutandis, with the Fairfield group in method and in personnel. Of the twenty-one members, seven were men. And in order not to overload the group with representatives of any one section of the community, there were a physician, a manufacturer, three business men, two professors in non-sectarian universities, and the personnel officer of a large employer of labor. Three of the men were converts, and one had been a student for the Baptist ministry.

At all times the leader of this group was in close touch with the member of The Inquiry who had conducted the experiment at Fairfield, and The Inquiry prepared the tests to be used. In the "religious social distance" test, exactly the same questions were asked, except that the word "Protestant" was substituted for "Catholic" where necessary, as "Would you vote for a Protestant as President of the United States?" "Would you engage a Protestant as private secretary?" Willingness counted as 0, hesitation as 1, and refusal as 2. There were nineteen questions in all, and seven persons took the test at Fairfield. If all had refused all such association with Catholics, the total score would have been 266. Their score actually was 83, or about 30 percent. In the Catholic group twenty-one persons took the test, and so their total score should be divided by three for the sake of making a genuinely fair comparison. Thus divided, the total Catholic score was 36.

This particular Catholic group, therefore, showed on the whole about two and one-half times as great a willingness to coöperate with Protestants in these specified ways as did the Fairfield group to coöperate with Catholics. But no general conclusions should be drawn from this, as another Catholic group might have a very different reaction. In spite of the effort to make the personnel of this group correspond fairly well with that of Fairfield, it must be admitted that the individuals had probably had more contact with Protestants than the Fairfield members had had with Catholics.

The "word-reaction" test naturally had to be changed considerably to fit a Catholic group, and hence no direct comparison of results with the Fairfield experiment is possible. The highest number of persons scratching any one word was eleven, and the word receiving that distinction was "Anti-saloon League." This is significant when taken in conjunction with the results of the third test, to be commented on shortly. It is interesting that the next highest score was on a word implying a practice sanctioned for some of the Roman Catholic Uniate Churches—"married priesthood," "woman preacher," "Martin Luther," and "John Roach Straton" were tied with nine votes each. "The Eighteenth Amendment," "Inquisition" and "Judge Ben Lindsay" each had seven votes. "The Ancient Order of Hibernians" evoked more antagonism than the "Y. M." or "Y. W.," being scratched by six persons as compared with four for the others. "The Mayflower" was not scratched at all, whereas "The Ark and the Dove" was scratched by two.

The words that were queried, as indicating that the person did not know the meaning, are almost as significant as the ones scratched. Among these was "The Ark and the Dove," so that it may be necessary to tell Catholics that these were the boats in which the first Maryland colonists came over. "Torquemada," "Ne Temere," "Filioque," "Gallicanism," "contemplative communities" and "laic" were likewise question-marked.

The third test was what was called at Fairfield "an anthology of hate." It consisted of twenty-three assertions supposed to be made by Catholics about Protestants. As the leader of the Fairfield group said, the assertions put into the mouths of Catholics were considerably milder than those put into the mouths of Protestants and presented to the Fairfield group. Each person was to mark the assertions as justified, probably justified, uncertain, probably unjustified, unjusti-

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fied. At Fairfield the average score was 17, or 21 percent of the total possible score; in the Catholic group it was —3, out of a possible +46. The Protestant group, therefore, showed itself more than five times as willing to believe the much stronger assertions presented to it as the Catholic group was to believe the much milder assertions presented to it. But the same caution must be kept in mind here as in regard to the first test, that the wider experience of the Catholic group tended to soften their judgment of Protestants.

The whole list of assertions can be found in the complete report of the Fairfield Experiment published by The Inquiry. Some of the assertions in this list are obviously true, from the Catholic standpoint, as, that Protestants do not accept the whole Bible. But they are not the cause of any particular friction between Catholics and Protestants. Leaving these aside, therefore, we find that what might be called friction-breeding differences receiving the highest score centered around the relations between church and state. For instance, the assertion that Protestants "though professing the American principle of separation of church and state, yet speak of this country as Protestant" scored 26.

It was, therefore, decided that the point of greatest interest for the Catholic group, as well as the source of greatest friction between Catholics and Protestants in this country, was the question of relations between church and state. The next few meetings were then devoted to an investigation of the facts in the case, in so far as these were available.

First of all, the group attempted to clarify its own conception of the American principle of separation of church and state, and great difficulty was found in suggesting any very clear and complete formulation of this principle. After considerable discussion, it was decided that this principle implied not only freedom of worship and no established church, but also from the standpoint of the state freedom from ecclesiastical interference in purely political matters, and from the standpoint of the church a corresponding freedom from interference by the state in purely ecclesiastical affairs.

The greatest difficulty was felt to hinge upon questions that were not purely political, and not purely religious, but politico-moral matters. In order to clarify its own stand on such questions, the group then elaborated the formula to carry the implication that no church should take action in an organized way on a political question or politico-moral question, unless inaction would mean a compromise of principle. The only specific example of such inaction being a compromise of principle that occurred to the group was the complete yielding by the church and by the family of practically all right to determine the primary education of their children, as was demanded by the Oregon school law. Prohibition was accepted as an example of a politico-moral question where inaction would not be a compromise of principle, because upright men equally zealous for temperance might differ as to the advisability of attempting to achieve temperance in this particular way.

Of course, in all this, no attempt was made to establish a formula of universal application. Union between church and state in England, or Norway, or Spain, or the activities of the Centre Party in Germany did not come within the purview of this group. Nor was there a question of defining strict rights on the part of the churches. They might still have the fundamental right to take corporate action on such questions as prohibition. All that was meant was that, considering the situation with which we are confronted in the United States, it is advisable that the churches and the state should abide by the limitations specified, and that a crossing of these boundaries by one or other church is likely to lead to unnecessary friction. The antagonism aroused in this group by the words, "Eighteenth Amendment," for instance, was not so much by the thing itself as by the impression that certain Protestant churches had used the civil law to force their conscience on the whole people.

The sensitiveness on the part of this group, however, was not only to the action of other churches in political matters. They wanted also to guard themselves against a vocal minority—or majority, either, for that matter—representing a particular attitude as Catholic, when in reality Catholics may legitimately differ. And in the last analysis the protection of one church against political action by another would seem to depend principally upon the development of this sensitiveness inside the various churches. The work must be done largely from within, as an attack from without tends to consolidate all members in repelling the attack. It confuses the real issue with loyalty to the church.

This particular group of Catholics, of course, probably does not have back of it a completely unanimous Catholic body. Other Catholics may take a somewhat different view as to just what should constitute separation of church and state in this country, and just what would justify corporate political action. But it is interesting to note that in the only one of the original British colonies founded by Catholics, Lord Baltimore took a very firm stand against what he considered encroachments by the clergy. This conflict between the Jesuits and Lord Baltimore

> has left permanent imprints on Maryland legislation. In her alone, of all the states, no lands can be sold, given or devised to a religious body, or for a religious use, without consent of the legislature; no priest, clergyman or preacher of the Gospel can sit in the Assembly, nor has any sat from the foundation of the colony (Maryland, the History of a Palatinate, by William Hande Browne; page 5).

The second half of the experiment, which was concerned with the attempt to discover the Protestant philosophy on the subject of church and state, will be the subject of next week's paper.

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CURING AGRICULTURAL DEPRESSION

By ROGER MACK

WHEN, as now, the bruit of national conventions with their doubt and surmise, their private and public prognostications, is in the air, it seems natural to hear talk of farms and farmers, and that vague something generally called the agricultural situation. In such discussion we persistently envisage the problem as peculiarly American. So far as the office-seeking politician is concerned, the agricultural enigmas which the country is apparently heir to are always local, or at the widest, national. Consequently, his solution, or promise of solution, is confined to criticism or emendation of the agricultural conditions of a certain definite area, or of several states or groups of states, in their relations with each other as component parts of the federal unity. This conception is rendered more patent by continued discussion in Congress and in the press.

We are constantly hearing of the period of depression through which American agriculture is passing. Is this true, or is it merely political propaganda? An impatient public opinion, for the most part ignorant of agricultural principle and technique, is inclined to discount the tales of farmers' inabilities and disabilities as the professional patter of a class that has to pay rent. But the fortunate, or unfortunate, few who have means of judging, do not doubt that the situation today is fully as bad as it was in the late eighties and early nineties of the last century. It is not a question of greater or less profits—the matter, in a nutshell, is that the ordinary farmer dealing with the land, as he has been accustomed to do, cannot make his produce pay for his expenditure.

Nor should the emphasis be local or national. The condition is world-wide. The English farmers are as hard pressed as our own; from Germany, and most of the British overseas dominions, arises similar murmur of complaint; even in France, where the farmers have been the recipients of especial legislative favors, discontent begins to be heard. The World Economic Conference which met in May of last year at Geneva recognized the world-wide character of agricultural depression. It was significant that this Conference came to an agreement not only on the existence of a depression but also on its causes. The immediate cause was low prices, or, in the phraseology of the Conference, "the disequilibrium which has arisen between the prices of agricultural products and those of manufactured products." This means that the low prices were caused not, as was commonly supposed, from a post-war excess of production, but from the diminished purchasing power of the industrial population which was itself the victim of economic duress. The world situation, then, is this: with millions of unemployed in Europe and the Americas unable to exercise their normal demand for food and the other raw products of agricultural enterprise, it is inevitable that overproduction of farm wares should ensue, and that, competitively, prices should be submerged to an unremunerative level. The thesis as to the cause of the depression logically follows.

The agricultural débâcle is intimately connected with, and must dance attendance upon, the general industrial and commercial situation. Prices will remain low until trade and manufacture are encouraged to start afresh by the fostering of public confidence and the removal of tariff walls which, since the war, have been a hindrance in almost every major country to the reëstablishment of a sound international system of commodity-exchange.

But how does this international aspect of the question bear upon proposals for the relief of farmers here and elsewhere? Is the world a victim of overproduction? Is the surplus of agricultural produce that submerges world prices a real surplus above a normal demand, or is it a surplus caused only by a weakened demand which might automatically right itself, if the industrial population be given a chance to exercise its normal consumption? This is a disjunctive problem of difficult solution, because of the fact that we have today no criteria of the normal consumer-capacity of the world's population. We can only approximate by taking as a premise the conditions of pre-war years, and by comparing the subsequent growth of population with the increase of production. Even then, on account of the changed geography of a post-war world, statistics are not as valuable as they otherwise might be. We have almost to make a fresh start.

World-population is estimated to have grown in the period 1913-1926 from 1,786 millions to 1,895 millions, an increase of 6 percent. But since the largest increase in these figures comes from India and China, countries which, agriculturally, are nearly self-sufficient, a more accurate approximation may be obtained by omitting these factors. Of course, since the war, there are a few exceptions to Asiatic self-sufficiency: Java exports sugar, and India, wheat; China and Japan have begun to demand wheat. Regarding these as contra-accounts on the ledger of international supply and demand, we may confine our remarks to the Americas, Europe, South Africa, Australasia and the Mediterranean littoral. What do we find? An estimated increase of population in the above-mentioned period of 50 millions, or about 7½ percent.

If, as authorities assert, among whites with a western standard of living, present-day agriculture uses one hectare of land in providing food and produce for one unit of population, and if, in the countries

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mentioned and in the years named, the increase in area of cultivated land was 36 million hectares, it follows, imperfect as the deduction may be, that the growth of cultivated land has lagged behind the needs of the population, and that the subsequent overproduction is an overproduction caused by an impaired demand, and not overproduction sui generis. For example, the sum of the four chief bread corns, rye, barley, maize and wheat: from all countries except Asia and tropical Africa, the increase of area is only 4 percent, and increase of production about 5 percent. The net result is the conclusion that, since 1914, the increased production of food has not kept pace with the increase of population, but has fallen far behind it, if pre-war standards are taken as guides. If, then, in the face of this situation, the world market is overstocked, as low and falling prices bear eloquent testimony that it is, the cause must arise from the fact that large numbers of people all over the world are living, by reason of poverty, at a lower consumption-level than they were before the war.

But the connection between low prices and impaired demand is not the only explanation of the "disequilibrium" from which world agriculture is suffering. The nature of agricultural production also enters in. Farming is notoriously a gamble against the loaded dice of the weather and the seasons. Anyone who has had experience, even if it is only vicarious, of, say, the western Kansas wheat-belt cannot but think so. Farming is largely an approximation. The farmer pursues a course which often bitter experience has proved to be justified on the average, and he takes that course regardless of temporary fluctuations of price and yield. We call him ultra-conservative. He is, in comparison with the manufacturer who determines his production by the inquiries and orders he receives. The latter has only one unknown, as it were, to contend with; his problem is a simple difficulty. The farmer's is a problem with many simultaneous unknowns. To a large extent, the output of agriculture cannot be controlled at all.

Again, the majority of the world's farming is done by peasant or family farmers who have only one routine for the farm and no alternative occupation. True, they often vary the cropping a little in accordance with prices, but generally they pursue the even tenor of their way, whatever the prices, because the farm is their living before it is their business. They sell only their surplus, and if it does not bring a good price, that is all there is to it—so much the less for clothes and the other necessaries they usually buy. Bad times, however, affect the production of a farmer community but slowly; eventually, however the younger generation declines to enter into so unremunerative a calling (ask any farmer's son if he is going to be a farmer) and this diminution of the agricultural population threatens the nation unless it is balanced by some increase of efficiency in the land at present under cultivation. Therefore, granting that an impaired demand is a contributory factor in agricultural depression, it may be asserted that the inflexibility of the farmer and his code is why low prices do not recover.

Mention, also, may be made here, of the notorious weakness of farmers as economic units of sale. This proneness to exploitation fortunately has been diminished by coöperative agricultural societies, but even these are unable to maintain the equilibrium of prices in the conflict of an open international market. For instance: in December of last year, the price of bacon pigs was below the cost of the grain required to produce them on the most economically scientific basis.

Then deflation—not mentioned by the Geneva Conference—plays its part. Deflation measures were first begun by Japan in 1920, and were adopted by the United States and Great Britain in the following year. The break in agricultural prices immediately set in. Subsequently, nation after nation has taken steps to stop the inflation that prevailed by returning to a currency based on a gold standard. It would seem that, in nearly every case, agricultural distress has been the invariable consequent of deflation measures, and the fact that that distress has been postponed in those countries which returned comparatively late to the gold standard (where, too, a mild inflation has succeeded the initial setback) would lend weight to this assumption. But the conclusion is not fundamental: whether deflation is the cause of low prices or only a throwback which revives casual economic conditions is a matter for expert theoretical debate. But this much can be said: the dominating effect of currency on prices cannot be ignored by those who pretend to endeavor to extricate the farmer from the depressing impasse into which he has fallen, especially if any credence is to be given to the often-uttered prediction that the world is on the brink of a lessened gold-production.

In consideration of these facts and deductions, it may be agreed that farming, as generally practised today, does not pay. Reform suggests itself along two main lines: first, the farmer must be looked upon, and must look upon himself, more as the manager of a business and the organizer of labor than as someone just making a living; secondly, there must be a widespread and well-considered attempt to make agricultural labor more and more effective. Let us look briefly at each of these.

First: The farmer must in the future look at the whole of farming, and nothing but the whole of farming. He must not allow himself to consider this or that small phase of it, and make his deductions therefrom. He needs to review all the operations of his art, all aspects of farm work, asking himself at each stage how labor can be economized, for he has to accommodate himself to an age of dear wages instead of cheap wages. Increased introduction of machinery would appear fundamental, but a study of how any given machine may be made to work economically should be undertaken. Most agricultural machines have begun by being tried and discarded because the

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poor tool could not sit up and tell its user how it was being maltreated. Tractors upon the farm are perhaps in this position today; the farmer has tried them, and the tendency is to go back to horses, except on the larger farms for emergency work. Yet one man with a tractor will do six times as much plowing as a man with a pair of horses. Not such fine work, perhaps, but still adequate, and there must be something more to be made of this saving of labor than is yet being realized in general practice. Of course the mere use of a machine is not necessarily an economy; there must be a certain magnitude about the operation before the saving in labor pays for the machine, and here the professors of agriculture in the country might help the progressive farmers by working out experimentally the economic data for the use of the newer implements.

But, without descending into details, the economical employment of labor is a problem of the first importance to the farmer which he will mainly have to solve for himself, aided by the instructors and investigators who are now available for the development and success of agriculture. It has three aspects: the elimination of crops and operations which have become too costly, however good in themselves; the substitution of machine for manual work; and finally, the hunting down of sources of waste labor on each particular farm, and in each particular operation.

Secondly: This is a necessary corollary from the former reform, because if labor is made more effective, less of it will go farther. In other words, it becomes cheaper. It may be agreed that the agricultural laborer is often a very skilled operative, who exercises far more technical skill and personal responsibility than his industrial vis-à-vis, earning perhaps twice or three times his wages. But it is generally deplored that these skilled craftsmen, the remnants, it might well be, of the old farm-gild system, are dying out and that the standard of workmanship has deteriorated greatly during the after-war years.

However, recent investigations have been made upon certain farms, of the kind that have for long been worked out in factories. Measurements have been taken of the comparative efficiency of different workers engaged upon the same job, followed by trials of the effect of teaching the right stroke to the non-efficient or of supplying some trifling means of easing or of quickening the operation. The results are very promising.

It is clear that the effectiveness of the agricultural laborer can be considerably increased and at the same time his fatigability decreased, by some sympathetic study of the actual mechanical and manual operations he is called upon to perform. It is even within the realm of probability that the farm laborer can be taught to earn, economically speaking, his present high wage, or even a higher rate. We often hear mention of more scientific modes of agriculture. This usually takes the form of soil-analyses and fertilizer-content. Although this aspect is very important, and cannot be ignored in the future, nevertheless it belongs to the problem of raw materials. The contention of the writer is that the human element that has been relegated to the background for so long, is the real crux of the solution. Soils and manures and fertilizers are always with us; they are the static element in farming. But the human factor comes and goes. It is dynamic, but is none the less important. It behooves us, therefore, to do something to stabilize this fluid element so that it can be the better used as a basis for deductions and foreshadowings.

In a word, the writer is inclined to the opinion, by his study of agricultural problems in many parts of the world, that what agriculture needs today is the scientific formulation of a body of knowledge that might be known as the psychology of agriculture.

For instance, there appears to be need that the master- or employer-farmer and the laborer should come closer together in their relations. In the past farming, unlike most industries, has allowed little space for group or gang government and supervision or the checking of the output upon a standardized job. Masters were, therefore, very dependent upon the goodwill and honesty with which their workers worked. This time has come to an end, or should come to an end, if agriculture is to enjoy a turn for the better. There is a splendid opportunity, I believe, at the present time among farmers of the world, and especially of the United States, to ensure better and more scientific work (and by that I mean predictable work) upon the farms, by instituting both an individual and an organized movement among farmers along the lines that I have barely sketched in this paper. After all, is not the function of a farmer leadership? And without being critical of farmers—for no one realizes better than I their present situation—may it not be fairly said that they are not giving themselves or their employees enough of a lead at present, so that their place in the social scheme of things has been overshadowed by forces that are really secondary? The farmer must come into his own; his work demands it; society needs it.

Definitions

The mansion of a robin;
November's ruin, restored;
An excellent umbrella;
A lyric of the Lord:

A supple toy for whirlwinds;
A strange, colossal weed;
An acorn's green achievement;
The triumph of a seed:

But we have no agreement,
Who dare define a tree;
What may be only timber,
Is God's high-priest to me.

ANNE BLACKWELL PAYNE.

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THE DEATH OF THE RICH MAN

By PADRAIC COLUM

IT WAS a road as shelterless and as bare as any road in Connacht. On one side there was a far-reaching bog, on the other side little fields, cold with tracts of water. You faced the Connacht hills, bleak and treeless, with little streams across them like threads of steel. There was a solitary figure on the road—a woman with bare feet and ragged clothes. She was bent and used a stick; but she carried herself swiftly, and had something of a challenge in her face. Her toothless mouth was tightly closed, her chin protruded, wisps of hair fell about her distrustful eyes. She was an isolated individual, and it would be hard to communicate the sensations and facts that made up her life.

Irish speakers would call the woman a "shuler." The word is literally the same as "tramp," but it carries no anti-social suggestion. None of the lonely cabins about would refuse her hospitality; she would get shelter for the night in any one of them, the sack of chaff beside the smoldering fire, the share in the household bit. But though she slept by their fires and ate their potatoes and salt, this woman was apart from them, and apart from all those who lived in houses, who tilled their fields and reared up sons and daughters; she had been molded by unkind forces, the silence of the roads, the bitterness of the winds, the long hours of hunger. She moved swiftly along the shelterless roads muttering to herself, for the appetite was 'plaining within her. There, on her way, was a certain village, but before going through it she would give herself a while of contentment. She took a short pipe out of her pocket and sought the sheltered side of a bush. Then she drew her feet under her clothes and sucked in the satisfaction of tobacco.

You may be sure the shuler saw through the village, though her gaze was across the road. Midway on the village street there was a great house ; it was two stories above the cottages, and a story higher than the shops. It was set well above its neighbors, but to many its height represented effort, ability, discipline. It was the house of Michael Gilsenin, farmer, shopkeeper, local councilor. "Gilsenin, the Gombeen man," the shuler muttered, and she spat out. Now the phrase "Gombeen man" would signify a grasping peasant dealer who squeezed riches out of the poverty of his class, and few people spoke of Michael Gilsenin as a Gombeen man; but his townsmen and the peasants around will tell you that Michael Gilsenin had the open hand for the poor, and that he never denied them the bag of meal nor the sack of seed-potatoes; no, nor the few pounds that would bring a boy or girl the prosperity of America.

To the woman on the ditch Michael Gilsenin was the very embodiment of worldly prosperity. It was said that Michael's two daughters would receive dowries of 1,000 pounds each. Michael had furnished the new chapel at a cost of 500 pounds; he had bought, recently, a great stock of horses and cattle; he had built sheds and stables behind his shop.

And Michael Gilsenin had created all his good fortune by his own effort. The shuler wondered what bad luck Eternal Justice would send on his household to balance this prosperity. And in her backward-reaching mind, the shuler could rake out only one thing to Michael's discredit. This was his treatment of Thady, his elder brother. It was Thady who had owned the cabin and the farm on which the Gilsenins had begun their lives. Michael had reduced his grasping and slow-witted brother to subordination, and he had used his brother's inheritance to forward himself. In forwarding himself Michael had forwarded the family, Thady included, and now, instead of life in a cabin, Thady had a place in a great house. Michael was old now, the shuler mused, he was nearly as old as herself. It was well for those who would come after him. His daughters had dowries that made them the talk of Connacht, and his son would succeed to stock, farms and shop. The shuler stretched out her neck and looked down the road and into the village street. She saw the tall, grey building, the house of stone with the slated roof and the many windows. And she saw a man hobbling out of the village. He had two sticks under him for he was bent with the pains. The man was Thady Gilsenin.

Thady Gilsenin was grudging and hard-fisted to the beggars, but he always stayed to have speech with them. His affinities were with these people of the roads. By his hardness and meanness, by his isolation and his ailments, he was kin to the shuler and her like. She quenched the pipe, hid it under her clothes and waited for Thady Gilsenin.

He stood before her, a grey figure leaning on two sticks. His hands were swollen with the pains, their joints were raised and shining.

"Well, ma'am," said Thady, "you're round this way again, I see."

"My coming won't be any loss to you, Thady Gilsenin," the shuler returned. Thady turned round and looked back at the big house.

"And how is the decent man, your brother?" asked the shuler, "and how are his daughters, the fine, growing girls?"

"His fine daughters are well enough," said Thady, turning round.

"There will be a great marriage here some day," said the shuler, "I'm living on the thought of that marriage."

"It's not marriage that's on our minds," Thady said,

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in a resigned way. The shuler was quick to detect something in his tone.

"Is it death?" she asked.

"Ay, ma'am, death," said Thady. "Death comes to us all."

"And is it Michael that is likely to die?"

"Michael himself," said Thady.

This to the tramp was as news of revolution to men of desperate fortune. The death of Michael Gilsenin would be a revolution with spoils and without danger. She was thrilled with expectancy, and she said aloud: "O God, receive the prayers of the poor, and be merciful to Michael Gilsenin this day and this night. May angels watch over him. May he receive a portion of the bed of heaven through the gracious intercession of the blessed Mother of God. May he reign in splendor through eternity. Amen, amen, amen." And crying out this she rose to her feet.

"I'm going to his house," she said. "I'll go down on my two knees and I'll pray for the soul of Michael Gilsenin, the man who was good to the poor." She went toward the village striking her breast and muttering cries. Thady stood for a moment, looking after her; then he began to hobble forward on his two sticks. They were like a pair of old crows, hopping down the village.

She could never have imagined such comforts and conveniences as she saw now in the chamber of the dying man. There was the bed, large enough to hold three people, with its stiff hanging and its stiff counterpane, its fine sheets, its blankets and quilt, its heap of soft pillows. There was the carpet warm under her own feet, and then the curtains to the window that shut out the noise and the glare. A small table with fruit and wine was by the bed, and a red lamp burnt perpetually before the image of the Sacred Heart, and so the wasting body and the awakening soul had their comforts and their convenience. Michael's two daughters were in the room. They stood there broken and listless; they had just come out of the convent and this was their novitiate in grief. The shuler noted how rich was the stuff in their black dresses, and noted, too, their white hands, and the clever shape of their dresses. As for the dying man, she gave no heed to him after the first encounter. He was near his hour, and she had looked too often upon the coming of death.

They gave her a bed in the loft, and she lay that night above the stable that was back of the great house. She had warmed herself by the kitchen fire and had taken her fill of tea, and now she smoked and mused, well satisfied with herself.

"This night I'm better off than the man in the wide bed," she said to herself. "I'm better off than you this night, Michael Gilsenin, for all your lands and shops and well-dressed daughters. I'm better off than you this night, Michael Gilsenin, for all your stock and riches. Faith, I can hear your cattle stir in the sheds, and in a while you won't even hear the rain on the grass. You have children to come after you, Michael Gilsenin, but that's not much after all, for they'll forget you when they've come from the burial. Ay, they will in troth. I've forgotten the man that lay beside me, and the child that I carried in my arms."

She pulled a sack over her feet and knees and up to the waist, and sleep came to her on the straw. But she was awake and felt the tremor through the house, when death came and took his dues. From that onward her sleep was broken, for people had come and horses were being brought out of the stable. Once old Thady came out, and the shuler heard him mutter about the loss in hay and oats.

When she came down to the yard she saw a well-dressed young man tending his horse. One of Michael's daughters came and stood with the young man, and the two talked earnestly together. The shuler knelt down on a flag and began sobbing and clapping her hands; she was working up to a paroxysm, but gradually, for she wanted to attract the attention of the pair without distressing them overmuch. The girl went indoors and the young man followed her. The shuler saw two empty bottles; they were worth a penny. She hid them under her dress and went into the house. She made her way to the front door, passing by many. People of importance were coming, and in such an assembly something surely would be gained. She stood by the street door and watched the great people come, priests, doctors, lawyers, shopkeepers and councilors. She stood there like an old carrion bird, her eyes were keen with greed and her outstretched hand was shaking. She heard old Thady saying:

"Now, thank God, we can be clear for the day of the fair. I was thinking that he would still be with us on the fair day, and we would have to close the shop, and that would be a great loss to us. Now we can have everything cleared off in time. God be good to Michael's soul."

Hokku

The Cherry Tree

The world is filled with You!
From what, besides Your beauty, could I have fashioned
flower-buds?
Tomorrow You shall have cherry-blossoms, my Maker.

A Mother to Her Child

The pine tree in the snow cannot know joy;
But you are come to me, flower of strength and whiteness,
Bearing implicit fruit of love.

Death

The moon does not change;
Tonight a shadow shuts from me its borrowed beauty.
This will be divinely true of you when you are dead.

Opinion

If all the sky should quiver into pinions,
And all the air should tinkle into silver singing,
The earth would still have need, I think, of bluebirds.

SISTER M. MADELEVA.

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COMMUNICATIONS

CATHOLICS AND PROHIBITION

Washington, D. C.

TO the Editor:—Many Catholics oppose prohibition on principle, and others favor it for similar reasons. But there are some who believe that it is not a matter of principle that is involved so much as the application of a principle. Alcoholic beverages and prohibition are not evils in themselves, except in so far as evils flow from them or rather the abuse of them, so that both sides are talking at cross purposes, while they desire the same end—the morality of our people. This group of people, who are more or less indifferent, oppose prohibition on the same grounds that the prohibitionist opposes alcohol, namely, because it is responsible for grave evils—equally as great as those which it remedies.

1. Before prohibition, the dealers in alcoholic beverages belonged to a law-abiding class of citizens. They paid their taxes and observed the laws regulating the sale of their product, and public opinion frowned upon those who did not. If these laws were not strict enough, they should have been made stricter, inasmuch as successful regulation of the liquor traffic would have produced far better results than has prohibition.

Since prohibition, the dealer in alcoholic beverages is not a law-abiding citizen who pays his taxes, nor does he obey any laws regulating the sale of his product, and public opinion does not frown upon his law-breaking but rather coöperates in it. As a result the liquor traffic has become a more serious public menace than it was before, and the prohibitionist is simply too proud to admit that he has made a mistake—and the evils produced by prohibition are only in their incipient state!

2. Before prohibition, abstinence was a personal matter. To refuse a drink now is to appear to endorse the radical element, which consists either of a few misguided zealots who are too proud to admit their mistake, or the far greater and more powerful class of bootleggers who want to protect their business. I once met a "highly respectable" bootlegger aboard ship, and I asked him how he managed to conduct his business. He said that three-quarters of the revenue cutter and coast guard officials were "fixed." If the few higher paid officials who were above bribery should seize his boats, he was insured against all loss by Lloyd's in London (and he refused to receive confiscated boats in payment of his loss because they were marked. He simply bought other boats with his insurance money.)

In this materialistic age when so many men do not feel accountable to God for their deeds, it is not possible to pay all government employees enough money to place them above bribery, and it is an exorbitant and unnecessary way of remedying the evils in question, even if it should succeed.

3. Before prohibition, abstinence was a moral virtue. Many people who formerly cultivated this virtue now seek virtue in other ways rather than be suspected of belonging to either of the above two classes of people. Besides, you are likely to make a genial host think that you object to his enjoyment of what he has a moral right to enjoy—a lack of charity of which every prohibitionist is guilty, though it is often inadvertent.

To young people of both sexes it offers a new form of temptation to be smart that did not exist before, which is greater because of this stigma attached to total abstinence. To this is added a certain innocuous adventure, accelerated by the fact that one may not get another chance to take advantage of it, even if he should want it at another time. The thought of a voluntary mortification is checked by the stigma attached to this particular form of mortification.

4. The evils that are remedied by prohibition could be remedied more effectively and economically by less radical methods, and without creating the new evils in immorality, dishonesty and even death, that have accompanied prohibition.

5. Probably the greatest evil in the history of civilization (far greater than the evils of alcohol) has been that mistaken and misguided zeal with which some people wish to remedy the abuse of a thing by destroying the thing altogether. The Protestant reformers sought to destroy the Church because of abuses within its fold, and the same kind of mentality seeks today to destroy Catholic education, freedom of speech, and other institutions involving the inalienable rights of people. Even if the thing were an evil per se, as was slavery, would it not have been far better to have taken twenty years longer, as was done in South America, to have gradually exterminated it, than to have brought about the terrible evils of the Civil War through the agitation of Abolitionists?

This large class of people, Catholic or otherwise, who have "no bone to pick" with either side of this controversy as to the principle involved, oppose that faction which they believe is the most dangerous to free government, and conform their lives and habits accordingly, so as to give them the very least encouragement possible at all times.

E. R. H.

THE WORK OF THE COMMONWEAL

St. Louis, Mo.

TO the Editor:—May I add my humble but sincere compliments and good wishes to the many others of which you have doubtless been the recipient?

I am heartily in accord with your principles, and I admire the fine spirit pervading the pages of your review, which bears the impress of connoisseurs rather than dilettantes. The Commonweal is a splendid paragon of what a Catholic journal should be and is highly deserving of the support of Catholics generally. It has bourgeoned forth into one of the fairest flowers in the garden of American periodicals. Fine phrases these, at which you may smile, but there is sincerity back of them.

As a consolatory thought for you, I may add that The Commonweal has been productive of much good among both my Catholic and non-Catholic acquaintances. The former it has awakened from a too common existing lethargy to study the burning subjects of Catholicism with which most of us have only a nodding acquaintance. In the latter it has helped much to dispel that biased attitude commonly nurtured by bigotry and ignorance of things Catholic. It is well, then, in these days when religion is verily the hub of conversation, to have an authority, reliable, fearless, staid and civil, coming from laymen themselves; something, too, provocative of thought and trenchant in its dissection of prejudices and calumnies.

Being a somewhat too avid reader, I peruse a great majority of the better weekly and monthly publications, domestic and foreign. I feel, then, that I am fairly able to pass judgment as to the high calibre of The Commonweal.

Whole-heartedly, therefore, I wish you every success in your much-needed and splendid work.

GEORGE A. SCHAEFER

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THE PLAY

By R. DANA SKINNER

Orchestral Drama

WHAT was once the sequestered Neighborhood Playhouse —or, at least, that part of it which did not become the Actor-Managers, Inc.—has just attempted, at the Manhattan Opera House, the very ambitious and certainly interesting experiment of staging visual interpretations of symphonic music played by the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra under Nikolai Sokoloff.

In the old days, the Neighborhood group christened similar annual efforts "lyric drama," so that this must properly be considered as the extension of an old and tried idea. The music chosen for the present bill consists of Bloch's symphony, Israel; Debussy's two nocturnes, Nuages and Fêtes, and the Borodin episodes, On the Steppes of Central Asia and Dances from Prince Igor. In a long program note in explanation of the term "orchestral drama," Miss Irene Lewisohn says it is used "to suggest an approach rather than designate a form," and adds later that "in combining orchestral color in sound, in plastic line, in gradations of light, of interplay of rhythms, we seek to find an expression for elemental moods that have touched us in the three musical compositions. . ."

I must be frank to admit that explanations of this sort are more confusing than illuminating. One knows, by common sense and instinct, what the Misses Lewisohn are seeking—a completion of one art by another, a visual interpretation of music by pantomime and scenic illusion. But why is this an "approach" rather than a "form"? One almost suspects, in this avoidance of clear terms, an unconscious attempt to make an old idea appear new. For the only real difference between the traditional ballet and "orchestral drama" seems to lie in the fact that ballet music was written with the direct intention of being interpreted by the dance, whereas the interpretation of symphonies, tone poems and the like must be supplied by the combined imaginations of scenic artists and dancers—using the word dancers in the broadest sense. The Russian ballet has done many times in this country exactly what the Neighborhood group is now attempting, and until speech is added to the plastic interpretations of the dancers, it can hardly be called a new form or even a new "approach."

The plastic interpretation—if we must have a new phrase—of Ernest Bloch's symphony, Israel, is the most ambitious part of the present program, and the least successful. The curtain rises on an impressive setting by Jo Davidson supposed to suggest the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem—impressive at least in the semi-darkness, but losing much of its suggested power as the lights go on and its realistic details are revealed. The stage is set to slope at an angle, but the general design is not such as to lend itself to effective groupings of the actors who wail and lament with the music the misfortunes of Israel or listen to the hope of the prophecies. Their action never blends into an imposing unity, never quite builds to a climax of aspiration. The effect is not improved by crude and ineffective lighting.

A subject of this sort seems to demand the highest expression of the scenic designer's skill, something as daring and transcendent as Norman Geddes's project for the Divine Comedy, in which groups can move and blend and rise slowly from level to level until, in the full light of the revelation at the end, they express a gigantic symbol of the racial quest. The splitting of visual interest between many detached groups in the present arrangement merely becomes monotonous, and is more suggestive in its mood of a number of self-pitying individuals than of a bewildered and searching and sorrowful race.

The Debussy nocturnes on the other hand have received exactly the kind of treatment which Israel lacks—and for this we must thank the gorgeous artistry of Ernest de Weerth. The mechanical execution of the setting is by no means up to its lofty and mystical conception, and once more crude lighting nearly destroys the effect obviously intended. But the picture as it first presents itself, and as it resolves later in a glorious movement of atmospheric shapes across the arches of a mountainous sky, is as perfect an adaptation of scenic idea to musical mood as I have ever witnessed. It is enough by itself to make one wonder why the Metropolitan Opera has never asked De Weerth to re-create the mystical glories of the Niebelungen Ring. De Weerth has caught up in one touch both the abstract feeling of unreality and the concrete presentation of primitive natural forces, the eternal duality of nature and the vision of the supernatural hovering beyond.

The early stages of the pantomime are somewhat disturbed by the angular antics of Michio Ito as the faun-like creature who dominates the focal interest of the stage. His method is a studied one, and has little of the effortless grace demanded both by the music and the pictorial suggestion of De Weerth. But with the appearance of the cloud-like forms, and of Benjamin Zemach as Storm Cloud, followed by the mystical procession of the flashing atmosphere, the whole stage becomes subtly alive with that "luminous dust participating in the universal rhythm of all things" which Debussy indicated.

After the imaginative heights of the Nocturnes, the descent to the regulation ballet presentation of the Borodin music is abrupt and anti-climactic. It is, in a way, well done, but without the full abandon and splendid fire of the Russian ballet, and without the aid of a setting that boasts any great distinction. When the Neighborhood group attempted a similar thing on their old small stage, the effect was gratifying and spontaneous. But they seem to be lost on the wide stretches of the Manhattan Opera stage. The high point in this particular group of numbers was the pantomime of Leo Bulgakoff in the character of a blind bard. The Debussy number is a contribution that New York should remember for long. The rest of the program is dignified and worthy, with great musical excellence, but neither startling nor new.

Here's Howe

THE avalanche of summer musical shows is now on, and the main task will be to find the small points in which they differ one from another. Here's Howe, playing at the Broadhurst Theatre, has, perhaps, less than the usual assortment of double meaning jokes, a couple of good comedians in Peggy Chamberlain and William Frawley, a lovely looking but feeble singing prima donna in Irene Delroy and very reminiscent music by Roger Wolfe Kahn and Joseph Meyer. The song, I'd Rather Dance Here Than Hereafter, echoes the old hokum of living for the present which we know, rather than for the hereafter which we don't—and so on for two hours and a half. In other words, a general mélange of familiar materials, plot and characters, popular fallacies, routine dances, etc., etc.

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BOOKS

The Monstrous Regiment of Popery!

Al Smith, the Pope and the Presidency, by Theodore Schroeder. Published by the author at 18 East Tenth Street, New York City.

THEODORE SCHROEDER is an accurate and voluminous writer on psychological subjects, an able exponent of pure Freudianism as distinct from those many writers who have used Sigmund Freud's theories as points of departure, a competent controversialist and a writer possessed of keen powers of reasoning.

His book in question, just from the press, carries on what might be called the Marshall side of the Marshall-Smith correspondence to the extent, typographically, of about 100,000 words. The work is thoroughly documented, chiefly by means of quotations of various Pontiffs, historians, theologians, the Catholic Encyclopedia, etc., in a logical argumentum directed toward the end of demonstrating that Governor Smith did not reply satisfactorily to the Marshall letter on the ground of insincerity and casuistry, and that the temporal policy of the Papacy as it is supposed to relate to the "indirect" control of all secular states remains unchanged from the era when such policy was exercised in the middle-ages.

In other words, Mr. Schroeder seeks to demonstrate that, if Governor Smith is elected President of the United States (unless Governor Smith expressly repudiates his allegiance to such a papal policy beforehand—in which case it is intimated that the Governor's word will be taken) the same United States will be ruled by His Holiness.

The author writes frankly from the viewpoint of the "thorough secularist." He says that Governor Smith has begged the question propounded to him by Mr. Charles C. Marshall and intimates that by Governor Smith's alleged assumption of "the martyr's pose" he has befogged the issue.

Very little fault could be found with the technical method used, unless it be that Mr. Schroeder has written in a style so heavily colored by his habituation to psychological expression as to make the book difficult reading for the average person. He, however, expressly states his conviction that the book will not reach nor influence the general voter. It is intended rather to clarify the minds of those who do not know their own minds on the question of the Church-state issue which seems paramount to the author.

For this reviewer the chief interest of this elaborate and able presentation of the issues indicated is the list of points which Mr. Schroeder in his close, accurate and telling reasoning, his adequate documentation and his endeavor to write fair-mindedly and with courtesy, has omitted. He makes it clear, however, that he is not so much concerned with the possibility of a Roman Catholic in the presidential chair as with having, in that exalted seat, an individual addicted to theocracy. It is obvious, however, that he focuses his attack on theocratical forms of government upon Governor Smith's possible candidacy because in his mind, according to the evidence he adduces (from Constantine the Great to Father Ryan) a Roman Catholic is more acutely committed to a theocratic sense of governmental management in the government's chief office, than (probably) anyone of another religion. Obviously, too, the prominence which this personal issue has attained through the Marshall letter, makes Governor Smith the readiest object for an argument against the "Church" side of an alleged "Church-state" issue looming in the immediate future.

Among the points which Mr. Schroeder has, perhaps naturally enough, omitted, is the resistless pragmatic fact that papal domination in these United States has been conspicuously absent in the past. Out of the innumerable examples of "papal aggression" cited by the author, not one has any relation to the United States. The example of the only definitely Roman Catholic direct rule in our geographical territory is Maryland, as every schoolboy should be aware, and Maryland, colonized under definite Roman Catholic auspices, is the only American Colony where the absolute liberty of conscience was affirmed from the inception of its foundation.

There is no lack of examples, and some of them "horrible," of "church" domination in the history of these United States. Only, the hard fact remains that none of these examples were Catholic! A few of them are the persecution and execution of the witches in Salem, the lawless activities of the modern Ku Klux Klan and the phenomenon of prohibition, fostered respectively by independency, the Baptists and Methodism. It has not occurred to Mr. Schroeder, perhaps because such citations would necessarily interfere with the rhetorical "unity" of his admirably reasoned argument, to mention these and other less conspicuous examples of "church" interference in the "thorough secularism" of our constitutional form of government, nor has he mentioned such publications as the Menace, and other similar blasts of "church" endeavor to stultify the secularity of the United States's governmental principles by appeals to prejudice. Beside such, the mediaeval "aggressions" of the Papacy, with their obvious relation to the then universally acknowledged governmental basis of feudalism and the divine right, can appear only legitimate and straightforward.

Nor has it occurred to Mr. Schroeder to remember that when the framers of our constitution quite definitely stated that religious allegiance should forever constitute no bar to the holding of public office, etc., those framers of the constitution were quite as well aware as he of the same "papal aggressions" of the dark and middle-ages which he cites.

A neutral-minded American, on reading this book, might well be convinced that Mr. Schroeder's logic is inescapable, i.e., Governor Smith, in the presidential chair, would probably follow his conscience, trained in the Roman Catholic parochial schools, and strengthened through his maturity by a certain legitimate dependence upon his spiritual advisers who, in turn, are subjects of His Holiness and so subject to His Holiness's decrees. But such a conclusion does not obviate the fact that a Christian Scientist in the presidential chair would as naturally hold to Scientist ideas, a Baptist to Baptist ideas, a Unitarian (like President Taft!) to Unitarian ideas. Such a reader, granted the intelligence with which the reviewer has arbitrarily equipped him, might very readily prefer the ism-less "autocracy" of Governor Smith to the anti-cigarette-smoking activities of what a writer in the American Mercury recently called an "evangelical baboon!"

Apparently what Mr. Schroeder wants for President is a "thorough secular," i.e., an atheist. The freedom from religious bigotry on the part of the innumerable Roman Catholic holders of high office in this republic, such as the late Chief Justice White, seems to have made no impression upon Mr. Schroeder. Neither, apparently, has that Methodist organization with its headquarters across from the Capitol in Washington, which comes nearer to ruling these United States today, and infinitely less pleasantly, than His Holiness has attempted to do, directly or indirectly, since the day when American independence was proclaimed.

HENRY S. WHITEHEAD.

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Reaping the Whirlwind

The Sower of the Wind, by Richard Dehan. Boston: Little, Brown and Company. $2.50.

HERE is not merely a notable novel written by a Catholic, but a really great modern Catholic novel. A big theme is developed with sureness and skill and with sustained dramatic deftness that seizes upon the imagination and conveys the message of the book from the mind to the very spirit of the reader by the loftiness of its intention and the beauty of its interpretation. When Miss Graves wrote The Dop Doctor, discerning critics hailed it as a work of rare distinction; that same quality of distinction is stamped on every page of The Sower of the Wind, but in this later work, the literary excellence is the encasement of a spiritual essence that ennobles and elevates the entire volume. Yet if piety permeates the novel, it is a robust, not to say rugged piety and not a pale pietism that would boggle at occasional figures of speech more nervous than nice.

The argument is arresting, even in briefest outline: A woman scientist of today, going up and down the earth to advance by research in anthropology the dawn of a new era of enlightenment, adopts a starving girl-child of the Australian tribe of the Arundas. She trains her in what, to the infant mind, is a nightmare dream of ape-like ancestors ranging the forests of western Europe in prehistoric ages, with the intention of proving to her fellow-scientists in later years that this brown race, the Arundas, was a highly developed people, capable of rising from the slough of superstition and assimilating in the highest degree the culture of the whites. At her death, a considerable fortune is left to this one who had been trained as a daughter, on condition that she appear before the London Anthropological Council, and, as Bachelor of the University of Paris in Arts, Science and Philosophy, prove in person every contention of her tutor and foster-parent, then return to Australia to establish the Arunda republic.

Safra Ferguson—as the girl has been taught to call herself—goes to Australia to fulfil her mission. But in the meantime, she has found a book in which there is a much more wonderful story of man and his destiny than that which her austere but love-hungering foster-mother has ever disclosed; a book that told her how, on one great day, the skies were filled with light, the stars rejoiced in their orbits and the sons of heaven chanted praise as the Mighty One came down to earth to kindle in the hearts of men the sparks of beauty and wonder and fan their longings for the home whence He came.

She meets at the coast settlement of Droone, one Gaspar Barboas, a pearler, rich but ruthless, who has drawn off the water from the land owned by a Catholic mission and forced the aborigines who have settled there to migrate much farther north. Just before his first meeting with Safra, he has been warned of reprisals by the natives but has sown the wind, heedless of the whirlwind that must result.

But the exciting scenes which follow, the material manifestations to this most materialistic of mortals are not cause for the title of the novel; this must be found in the inner storm which mounts as evil gains mastery over the mind of the man, despite the promptings to good born of association with Safra. What is fixed in the memory of the reader is not so much the scene in which the devoted girl rescues him from the octopus which his enemies have conveyed to the swimming pool —a lasting reminder of his cruelty to the tribesmen—as the comparison made by Safra when the octopus appears for a moment a short while before Barboas, in an endeavor to accomplish the ultimate of his wickedness, falls into the basin:

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"Is he not terrible, Barboas? Like a wicked thought in a human heart—like selfishness embodied. A stomach eyed and mouthed—and bordered with grasping arms."

From this point, when, having rescued the unworthy, Safra goes on her last journey, the book becomes bigger and bigger, until the climax is reached in the story told to the wretched man by the missionary bishop whose flock had been despoiled at the sowing of the wind. As that story is told, Barboas, battered by the whirlwind, becomes at last as a little child. Pride in self perishes and remorse becomes sincere repentance, wrenching from the innermost recesses of his soul the prayer that bring him ultimate peace.

ERNEST F. BODDINGTON.

Two Poet-Prophets and a Preacher

Fireflies, by Rabindranath Tagore. $2.50; Wind out of Betelgeuse, by Margaret Tod Ritter. $1.25. New York: The Macmillan Company.

A GOOD epigram is a great intensity of feeling and an unfailing precision of observation rendered in a quick gesture. So that poetry which holds its raison d'être in epigrammatical qualities must needs depend for its success upon all that there is in poetry as we know it—upon the heightened emotion that makes the lyric, the soul-searching eye that gives us the character-study and the sense of dramatic values in words and situations that creates the play. With them, all of life and movement can be crowded into the small space of an epigram; without them, it is mere posed cleverness. That Tagore has these qualities, and has them in an astounding measure, is a fact to broadcast with no little enthusiasm. For in Fireflies, his latest and perhaps his most unique book of all, the soul and the thoughts of this eastern mystic are illuminated to the core in flashes of brilliant and subtle wit. Yes, but "wit" is hardly the word, though, for it is an uncanny wisdom that moves here, carrying its burden with exquisite gaiety and grace.

> "The world speaks to me in pictures,
> My soul answers in music,"

says Tagore, and the heart of the matter is in this. Nothing escapes him—no swift touch of beauty, no smallest foible in man's character, no sudden strangeness in nature; all that the man has brought into his life is here in its concentrated essence. It holds all the compact silences of the East, its exotic suggestiveness and its unseen turmoil of mind and soul.

How essentially Greek Tagore is in spirit, how inviolably natural, how perfectly impartial! Only a fresh wind off the sea in the early morning, pregnant with salty vastness, can bring the sense of freedom that he brings. There is so much that is invigorating in him—well, one might go on quoting indefinitely. In the comparative darkness of what we know about ourselves, these "fireflies" light up for a second, with veritable radiance, the little space around them.

Of Miss Ritter's Wind out of Betelgeuse, one cannot say as much, though she too has something of the epigrammatical in her poetry. But it has not the intensity of Tagore's insight, and loses in the degree that it becomes somewhat involved in an abstract cynicism. Yet there is a freshness, a freshness that is glittering and individual. She has an acute feeling for words—a feeling that leads her, indeed, almost too far when she speaks of "broken petals"—and her reactions are generally fine and delicate. There is a reality, such as we see in The Heart of India, that is graphic without losing any of the more valuable interpretative values; and there is a most striking sense of character and personality, such as we find in those two extraordinary sonnets holding Bernhardt and Duse up to comparison, where Miss Ritter so perfectly mirrors the souls of these women, so very opposite in temperament and integrity, as they appeared under identical circumstances—namely, in Camille. Still, at other times, she does not by any means convince me either of her poetic gifts or her sincerity, particularly in such stuff as Guide to Edgware Row or Cenotaphs. However, I shall not soon forget Cruse of Oil and Ordeal by Fire, for in these her promise is greatly manifest—indeed, her achievement. Chinese Scroll is one of the most charming of her shorter pieces and is indicative of the quality of much that is here:

> "If the mist of delicate perfume
> Which envelopes my plum tree
> Were to shape itself
> Into visible pattern,
> I know what cloud-like brow were lifted,
> What breast, what thigh, what heel, impearled
> Against the silk-grey surface of evening."

JOHN HYDE PRESTON.

Storm Clouds in the Far East

The Restless Pacific, by Nicholas Roosevelt. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. $3.00.

WHEN George Nathaniel Curzon, "the most superior," wrote a book, he did no more than follow the custom of young Englishmen with an eye to imperial advancement. Everyone of his generation with any such aspiration wrote a book (or tried to) which should be sufficiently interesting to be readable by a discriminating public, and sufficiently statistical to be of sober quality. The book should also be statesmanlike and show forth a policy and perhaps a corrective criticism.

In the year of his civil service activities in Washington, Theodore Roosevelt confided to a friend, whose father was adviser to the emperor of Korea, his secret envy of anyone to whom it might be given to direct or guide policy in the far East, as Napoleon dreamed once of an eastern empire centering in Byzantium resurgent.

Thirty years later another Roosevelt takes up the thread of events in the East, which appear so tangled to the home-dwelling American, and shows what has grown from Roosevelt's prevision, Curzon's stately progress in imperial Britain, and (not too fantastic nor far-fetched) from some of the contingent realities of Napoleon's Byzantine dream.

Mr. Nicholas Roosevelt's inclinations would naturally bring forth such a book. Diplomacy has attracted him—and world commerce, when Willard Straight created a business organism which should have taken a leading part in post-war reconstruction, but died when Willard died in France and Frederick Holbrook broke under the strain of Hog Island, following immediately upon the Russian revolution. Mr. Roosevelt chose then a third activity in the same line of world politics: constructive editorial journalism, rather than the mere passing on of undigested news gathered by correspondents with a keen eye to facts and no sense or knowledge whatever of the age-old roots of those facts, as is our usual editorial way. That is as good a preparation for an American's share in world politics as either of the other two; combined with the other two it becomes well-nigh complete.

One would expect a first-rate book from such a source and Mr. Roosevelt has produced it. Particularly important is the accurate vision evidenced therein of Russia's fundamental as-

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pirations in foreign affairs, and of Japan's "immoral" policy. The present reviewer happened to be for many years political adviser to that oriental emperor whose land and subjects were the stake in the great struggle for supremacy between Russia and Japan. It was his task to save Korea if possible, and in attempting that impossible feat he was in constant conflict with the agents of both powers. Nevertheless it was obvious to him that Japan's tactics were meticulously patterned on those of Europe, and the tactics of Europe were accepted as standards. It is also obvious to him that Russia's imperial ambitions have not changed in essence. We condemn those European methods today, very largely because those to whom they were applied then are resisting them everywhere now with such vigor that we have been obliged to pause and think what we are about.

The underlying and moving causes of world politics are facts. They can be analyzed; methods, that is to say, policies, can be built up, flowing from principles based upon facts. It is a necessary study today to see whether national policies are rightly set up from principle and fact, or whether nations have not drifted into ways of doing things which do not give the best results.

The Restless Pacific is a sober, conservative and balanced book, and has the additional quality of being written by one who knows America's past from the tradition of personal participation in its upbuilding.

WILLIAM FRANKLIN SANDS.

Moonlit Moments

A Girl Adoring, by Viola Meynell. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company. $2.50.

MISS Viola Meynell is unquestionably a gifted and unusual writer, but the traits have been so allotted to her that it is possible, on occasion, for the second to obscure the first. The very refinement of her perceptions, the very sureness with which she passes over the crass and commonplace to seize upon what is lovely and strange, sometimes operates to the undoing of that impression of underlying reality and significant proportion with which no writer can dispense. Least of all can a writer like Miss Meynell, who specializes in the fragilely molded and fleeting thought, the rare and refined emotion, the moonlit moment, dispense with it. Her work is in danger of falling apart into mere precious little tenuities, disappointing in themselves and actually misrepresenting her real talent.

For Miss Meynell is no sentimentalist. Her vision is straight, her touch firm and untroubled. The two novels Narcissus and Columbine, and the short stories which appeared about a year ago, exhibit an unscanted and authentic measure of reality, however strangely and even mystically the accents on it were placed. But when, as in the case of Second Marriage, for instance, or of the present novel, A Girl Adoring, Miss Meynell goes on a sort of esoteric jag, and riots in what one must call static exultation among her private intimations and assurances, it is hard indeed to discern the outlines of the actual—the sober, integrated, meaningful, unresting actual—in what she produces.

The love story of Claire Vanderleyden and Robert Hague, which furnishes any substance that A Girl Adoring possesses, is, indeed, nothing more than a series of states of mind. It has credibility, for the reason that Miss Meynell displays enough of the old sureness to give us unerringly the cores of their two contrasted temperaments: Claire troubled about the deficiencies of life, warmly mothering it, filling in the gaps; Hague possessing all the power of a man who really accomplishes things,

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yet terrorized by his secret knowledge of his own unworthiness. But there is no development in the love story, no progress from obstacle to obstacle or from realization to realization: not only is it undramatic in the theatrical sense, it is hardly objective in any sense.

Miss Meynell does better with those characters on whom she does not lavish such paralyzing attention. Gilda is recognizable, giving cool heed and sound, stable advice to friends in difficulties, while "Far away from her words, and remote from all her maxims and principles and upbringing was the thing that ran like wildfire through her being—the great exception that her words never stumbled against, and which never modified her opinions or beliefs, the thing that left her perfectly free to speak and think as it was most natural to her to do, the thing that required nothing of her, in fact, except the whole passion of her existence."

Laura, too, is recognizable, living with deliberately achieved contentment on the surface of life, among the beautiful and delicate details that her wealth makes possible; living so because her heart has been gradually and cruelly broken by the slow death of her child. So is Morely, the brightly and attractively selfish older brother.

Also, Miss Meynell cannot help including some memorable and beautiful bit of description in everything she writes. The picture of Claire and Hague driving the flock of sheep through the dark is that bit in A Girl Adoring.

MARY KOLARS.

Ransomed Souls

The Great Magdalens, by Hugh Francis Blunt. New York: The Macmillan Company. $2.25.

THERE have been numerous Magdalens since the Magdalen who paraded her sins in the time of Christ was won to repentance. Some of these great sinners became notable examples of piety, reverenced for their renouncing of the follies and pleasures of the world and for the good they did in their many years of atonement.

Innumerable volumes have been devoted to women who shamed their sex by their vices, especially to women who found their way to palaces of kings and princes of the France over which the Bourbons ruled. It must be said that few of those volumes have been prompted by an admonitory purpose. The temptation to capitalize the frailties of women has ever been strong with biographers on the hunt for the sensational. The authors have been more eager to provide salacious entertainment than to "point a moral." The women are shown in their sins but not in their sanctities.

The other and the better half of the story of some Magdalens who did much to clear their records of the wrongs they did is told by Father Blunt, who shows, as he also does in Great Penitents, that "sin doesn't pay," and that "the mercy of God endureth forever." Father Blunt tells enough of the incidents in the lives of the score or more of women whom he selects for examination, to inform the reader of the depths of sin to which the victims had fallen, emphasizing the transformations wrought by the grace which turned the sin-burdened women into penitents.

With candor, but lively charity, Father Blunt depicts the lurid and amazing careers of some of the women whose conduct made the world gasp, from the days when Thais, the Alexandrian courtesan, was induced to discard her scarlet robes for the coarse rags of a monastic cell, to the days of Pompadour, the most audacious and profligate of the mistresses of Louis XV.

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The Bourbon follies are reviewed by Father Blunt in a judicious way. He questions many of the legends that are found in the records of that time, when "all the liars wrote memoirs," based largely on gossip and biased by personal rancors. He cites the authentic accounts of the Duchess de la Vallière, the little country girl who, as mistress of Louis XIV, was "one of the long line of abandoned women who made the Bourbon line a by-word in history." The Duchess atoned for her sins by a service of thirty-six years as a sister, helping the poor and the ill. Madame de Montespan, who supplanted De la Vallière in the affections of the king, spent more than a score of years as a penitent. Margaret de Maintenon, who taught Montespan's children, and thus found her way into the heart of the "fickle king," is also among the other notable (or notorious) characters in Father Blunt's gallery.

Father Blunt condones the misdeeds of none of the beautiful sinners; but he is not a censorious judge who feels it his duty to cite the erring to his bar merely to condemn them. He is confident that in even the worst of the offenders there is ever a bit of the saint. He rejoices when he can prove that the courtesan who turned from her wickedness to serve God was sincerely repentant. In this lies the high spiritual value of The Great Magdalens.

P. A. KINSLEY.

Wessex in Variorum

Thomas Hardy from Serial to Novel, by Mary Ellen Chase. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press. $2.50.

THE thesis of Miss Chase's scholarly discussion is that the periodicals which published the Hardy novels in serial form exacted serious concessions of artistic feeling and honesty in order to avoid giving offense to the fireside public. As a rule the passages objected to were such as embodied a frank treatment of sex, or incorporated some shred of naturalistic philosophy. Three novels—The Mayor of Casterbridge, Tess of the d'Urbervilles and Jude the Obscure—are analyzed by Miss Chase. She has diligently compared the several editions of the novels with the serialized versions, and has noted all the divergencies. Jude the Obscure suffered most heavily, of course, but the alterations in Tess are really more surprising.

A survey of the evidence presented can leave no reader in doubt about three things: the magazine public in those days was exceedingly squeamish, at least if the editors judged it correctly; Hardy was willing to make alterations in a spirit that reveals, at least, his willingness to placate the public fondness for sensations; and the revisions made for book-publication indicate clearly that he knew his own mind very well. Miss Chase draws all these conclusions and more in a final chapter. Indeed she quotes with considerable irony this remark by another critic: "Mr. Hardy is entirely uncompromising. He will not placate an audience." The best explanation seems to be that Hardy needed the income from serial publication, that (like the majority of other writers) he bowed good-humoredly and satirically to editorial opinion, and that he then proceeded to make his books what he thought they should be.

As a technical study of some of the Wessex novels, Miss Chase's book dovetails naturally into the scheme proposed by Professor Beach's indispensable Technique of Thomas Hardy. It is a straightforward and matter-of-fact book which the student cannot ignore, and which is more pleasant than otherwise to read after one has run through the speculations of such people as Mr. Lascelles Abercrombie.

GEORGE N. SHUSTER.

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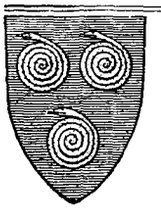

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THE QUIET CORNER

I counsel thee, shut not thy heart nor thy library.—C. LAMB.

Britannicus was heaving heavily over one of the new books in the Library; it was evident that reprobation was strong in his soul, for at the end of a violent jolt he threw down the volume and in an apocalyptic tone declared—"The way of the translator is hard!"

"You mean transgressor, my friend," remarked Angelicus, in an amiable tone quite unusual to him latterly.

"What's the difference, anyhow, in a time when we are smothered with translations, most of them bad, many of them false and lying presentations of original authors who, I may add, are not too truthful themselves?"

"Sauce for the gander, sauce for the goose,
The devil take the hindmost who makes the excuse!"

"I divide translators into three classes: the beauty-parlor scribe who pins flowers upon the muse's brows; jazzes up the hardened joints of rheumatic paragraphs; and introduces saxophone variations and oboe cadences upon the flat surfaces of commonplace pages; secondly, there is the hostile translator who maliciously, or, as he thinks, wittily, can upset professional dignity with the help of a printer's devil, speaks of the battle-scarred heroes as 'bottle-scarred Neroes,' and drags down a lofty passage into a muddy reservoir of banality. Thirdly, we have the temperamental translator, who may also belong to one of the two divisions I have spoken of. This personage may or may not be fitted spiritually, artistically or intellectually for the rendering of his original author. Translating word for word, quite literally, he will reproduce his subject with a personal tone of reverence, or, equally, word for word, he will inject hostility and indecorum into his version; as an artist he may feel that the losses sustained in the translation of a fine work should be recompensed with new beauties, such as Fitzgerald applied in his version of the Rubaiyat; he will enlarge on a sentiment or a piece of vision that seems only inherent in the original work.

"This is the place for a real artist not a scene painter or a sophomore. Here, then, is the scope of an Arthur Symons, exquisitely rendering the odes of Saint John of the Cross or Saint Teresa; the renaissance perfection of a Fray Luis de Leon transcribing Horace into Spanish. Great translators are born, with the souls of artists and the sympathies of unselfish genius in heart and mind."

"Who was it that said translating was merely presenting the back stitching of a tapestry?" asked Britannicus, himself no mean translator. "And this book by James Jenkins—Tambo—issued by Robert M. McBride and Company, bears out some of your grievances, Doctor. A crude young American, full of the ha! ha! of the corner saloons, passes some years in the land of Peru; acquires the language, if not the manners of the Peruvians and sets about to present their civilization, armed with the rather scurrilous books of the anti-clerical Ricardo Palma, with a result that is quite falsifying, and even at times uproariously funny to our cruder New York risibilities.

"We are treated to an extraordinary version in English of the Bull of Canonization of Saint Rose of Lima by Pope Clement X, April 12, 1671, which is announced as a literal rendering of the Spanish version of Father Provano, Dean of the Cathedral of Riobamba, Ecuador. The inspiration and refinement of Mr. Jenkins will appear in the first words of his English version:

" 'The Celestial Paterfamilias whose nature is good, whose

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will is power and whose work is mercy, has searched into the most distant confines of the earth for guests to assist at his royal banquet.' 'Various angels were put by God into Rose's service; so intimate was her confidence with one of them she treated him not only as her very close friend, but also as her gardener and messenger.'

Occasionally we have found ourselves harboring a sentiment of wonder at the extraordinary specimens North America sends to represent it in South America. One-hundred-percenters from towns in the far South and West, where a bath-tub has never been known to make its appearance, not even in the principal hotels, run about shrieking over the noisomeness of ancient cities, commenting on the numerous chapels and scarcity of bath houses and generally scandalizing any decent-minded Yankee who happens upon them. Listen to this bit of interpretation of a convent chapel in Lima:

" 'Phantoms of the middle-ages kiss the tassel of a purple Christ. Figures of gold kiss altars of silver. Votive flames dance wishes, red and blue and green. Vessels of gold, conch-shells of silver, branched candlesticks encrusted with gems. Marble pink as Renoir's nudes, brocades rich enough for a sultana's divan. How pale Christ looks, how dissipated, against the crimson velvet so lavishly hung from the ceiling. . . Fish, reptiles, cock and cross, all of polychromed cedar, carved and painted by dead Indians' hands. . . For all our magic scapulars we cannot escape our barbaric past. We are Spanish, Indian, Negro and Moor. Authority? The elegance of Roman form is in itself sufficient authority.' etc., etc."

"And we are asked," interposed Angelicus, "to accept this undigested jargoning as style and interpretation. We are only on the edge of South America as yet. The author of The Bridge of San Luis Rey, as well as the author of Tambo, are merely the earliest among our novelists to read the Peruvian Traditions of Ricardo Palma, the Studies of Old Limeño Types by Galvez. We shall be swamped by this sort of offensive interpretation of lovely colonial places and customs, if we cannot register a protest, if we cannot arraign these authors for their flamboyant exuberance of fancy and deplorable vulgarity of hearts. Certainly, this is no emanation of original literature, however clever, however rowdy, however laughable may be the result. The structural forms of prose and verse have been handed down to us from the masters; to re-create a work of literature, it is necessary to do more than to add a touch of American slang or add a new misinterpretation to older ones."

—The Librarian.

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